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"I won't have my hair combed, you ugly girl " P. 20.

HOWARD AND HIS TEACHER



MRS. LESLIE'S JUVENILE SERIES

SHEPARD, CLARK & BROWN.
BOSTON.

HOWARD AND HIS TEACHER,

THE SISTER'S INFLUENCE,

AND

OTHER STORIES.

BY

MRS. MADELINE LESLIE,

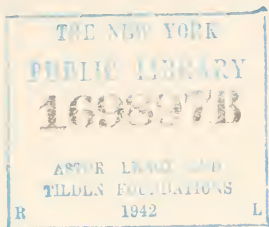
AUTHOR OF "CORA AND THE DOCTOR," "COURTESIES OF
WEDDED LIFE," "HOUSEHOLD ANGEL," ETC.



BOSTON:

SHEPARD, CLARK AND BROWN.

1859.



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THIS
LITTLE VOLUME
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
TO THE
DEAR CHILDREN OF OUR NEW ENGLAND SABBATH SCHOOLS,
IN THE EARNEST HOPE THAT IT MAY CONTRIBUTE
TO THEIR USEFULNESS
AND ENJOYMENT.

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HOWARD AND HIS TEACHER.

CHAPTER I.

HOWARD'S HOME.

Description of Betty and Angelia. — Trouble in the Nursery.
— Howard's Treatment of his Nurse. — His Father's Interference. — The Sabbath Ride. — Mrs. Langdon's Reflections.

IT was the Sabbath morn. The day was bright and beautiful. The hills and vales, the fields of waving grain, and the tall trees were bathed in the glad sunshine; while every leaf and slender spire of grass were dancing in the merry breeze. The air was full of melody from the happy songsters who were pouring out their morning lays to their Maker. All nature was praising the hand divine that formed them so beautiful and fair, while the air was redolent

with incense which every passing breeze offered from the flowers to their Creator.

Standing a little back from the main road, in the suburbs of one of our New England cities, was a Grecian cottage, where the noble porticos, with their clinging vines twining lovingly around the pillars, the Venetian shutters, the smooth lawn separating the house from the road, plainly indicated it as the abode of wealth and refinement. Let us advance over the smooth gravelled walk to the door, and introduce ourselves to the inmates. There is no sign of life perceptible, though the sun is high in the heavens. Ah, yes; Betty is in the outer shed, picking up some chips to hasten her fire.

A very singular person is Betty, very much out of keeping with the exterior of the establishment. Her hair is flying in every direction. She is very loosely robed, and her feet entirely bare. But she has kindled the fire under the tea-kettle, and now is at work, with right good will, to get the breakfast, which, according to

her mistress's directions, is to consist of coffee and chocolate, hot muffins, eggs, and sliced ham. She puts the muffins into the rings to bake, and then runs to her room to finish her toilet. Though absent but a very few minutes, she returns decidedly improved in appearance, and now looks, what she really is, a good-tempered, warm-hearted daughter of Erin.

She is followed by a younger girl, whose hair, rolled in innumerable papers, and whose zone, very tightly bound, are the principal things to attract attention to her. She has brought a pitcher from the nursery for warm water, and is highly displeased with Betty for giving her the trouble to do so.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Betty, to be so late about the fire. The water in the pipes is just as cold as Greenland, and you know neither Master Howard nor Miss Emeline will be washed in cold water, (or washed at all,") she muttered, in an under tone.

"And sure it's myself, Miss Angelia Jameson,

is sorry to be givin' ye the grate trouble," said Betty, with rather a mischievous expression, "and ye so strapped up, it must be 'mazing uncomfortable for the like of yees to be stooping over sae ungainly a thing as a tay-kettle; but, indade, and it's no my own fault aither, for it was but last Sunday week, not knowing the wishes of the mistress, I was up at dawn, and had the breakfast on the table just as if it was not Sunday at all."

Betty was growing quite eloquent, when she was interrupted by a loud scream from the nursery, followed by a voice calling "*Angelia! Angelia!*"

Angelia hastily obeyed the summons of her mistress; and we will follow her to the nursery, where Mrs. Langdon was trying to restore quiet, and to appease the baby, who had fallen from bed in the absence of the nurse. "Baby, hush, baby, stop crying, and she shall go ridy, ridy, with papa and mamma; and she shall have on her red shoes, and her pretty new bonnet."

"Can't I go, too, mamma?" screamed Emeline.

"No, you shan't; it's my turn. You said I might go next time, ma:" and Master Howard advanced, with a very red face, to his sister as if he were intending to strike her; but Angelia, who had poured the water into the basin, forcibly carried him off to the sink.

"How could you leave the children so long?" said Mrs. Langdon, in a petulant tone; "the baby fell out of bed."

"Howard pushed her out," exclaimed Emeline.

"I didn't, either," bawled out the boy, from the dressing room.

"Will baby go in bed with sissy?" said mamma, who was still in her night dress. "Angy take her very soon." But baby would not consent to such an arrangement, and the mother was obliged to take miss to her own room.

"What was the noise?" said a voice from the bed. "I declare, it's hard if I can't get a little

rest on Sunday, when I'm so driven to death all the week. I haven't slept a wink since that horrid scream."

"Lucy fell out of bed while Angelia was gone to the kitchen for water," said Mrs. Langdon, sighing, as she advanced with the child in her arms. "I wish, Charles, you would take her, and keep her quiet, until I can dress. She won't stay with Emeline."

"Where's Angelia? I want to get another nap," replied Mr. Langdon, in a sleepy tone.

"She's washing Howard."

"She's whipping him, I do believe," he added, as a perfect roar came from the boy. Mrs. Langdon flew to the door.

"I won't have my hair combed, you ugly girl. I say I won't. I'll tell pa you struck me;" and he burst into a loud cry.

Mr. Langdon was now thoroughly awake. He sprang from the bed, saying, "Mary, how can you allow that boy to behave so?" His noise will rouse the neighborhood."

“I should like to know how I’m to help it?” she asked, in a desponding tone, sinking into a chair, as if she were about to cry. “I do believe there never was so bad a boy as Howard. He’d wear out the patience of Job. Mine was exhausted long ago; and Angelia threatens every few days to leave, he talks so impudently to her.”

“Let her go,” said Mr. Langdon, preparing to shave.

“But it would be just as bad with another, and she is honest. Why can’t you,” she asked, hesitatingly, “try what you can do with him? The boy will be ruined if he goes on so; and then he exerts a sad influence upon Emeline. She would be a quiet child if she were let alone.”

“You needn’t expect me to interfere. Sunday is the only day I’m with my family, and it’s come to a pretty pass if I can’t have one day in the week to please myself. If you want another servant, say so, and I’ll bring one from

the city to-morrow. I'm willing to do every thing in reason for my family, but I can't be expected to turn nursery maid."

Master Howard, having finished his morning toilet, was now kicking against the door of his father's dressing room.

"Stop that noise," said the father, in a loud and excited voice.

Howard kicked the harder. "Breakfast's ready, I say, and I'm half starved. Ma promised I should go to meeting to-day, and wear my new clothes; and it's meeting time now."

Mr. Langdon walked hastily to the door, caught the astonished boy by one arm, and set him violently into a chair, saying, as he did so, "If you let me hear any more of your noise, I'll whip you so you'll be glad to keep quiet."

Howard had been threatened before; but as he had never received the whipping, he burst into a loud and angry cry.

This disobedience was so open, that Mr. Langdon caught up his wife's slipper and hit the boy

first upon one side of the head, then on the other ; the blows falling harder and harder as he grew more and more excited, until Mrs. Langdon ran screaming to the rescue, while the baby fell into the chorus with all the strength her lungs would allow.

“There, Mary, I hope you’re satisfied. At any rate, I’ve done my duty once by the boy, and hope he’ll remember it. Not a whist, Howard,” as the boy sat holding his mouth with his hand, to keep in the sound. “I think that will teach you to obey your father ;” and satisfied that he had fulfilled the obligations of a parent to his child, he advanced to the sink to wash the lather from his face. He had no sooner turned his back, than the mother, feeling that her child had been abused, slipped some candy into his hand as a peace offering.

Angelia, having dressed Miss Emeline, now knocked at the door for the baby, and the family went below for breakfast. Notwithstanding her late rising, Betty had prepared a very tempt-

ing repast, and looked so smiling as they entered the room, that Mrs. Langdon almost returned the smile upon the good-natured face of the servant, as she said, pleasantly, "The top of the morning to yees, and I'll be hoping the breakfast'll be relishing a bit."

During the morning repast, the question of going to church was agitated. Howard was sulky, or he would have had something to say upon the subject. Mrs. Langdon felt unequal to the effort; her husband thought it too warm, and that a lounge upon the sofa with a newspaper would be far more inviting; so it was concluded to postpone church-going until afternoon. This was too much of a disappointment for the son and heir, who had fondly hoped by his fine appearance to fill the hearts of his young companions with envy and admiration; and he began to kick the legs of the table, but a decided "Stop that, sir," from his father, soon put an end to any outward demonstration of his displeasure.

Mrs. Langdon dismissed the children to the garden for a play, giving them strict charges not to meddle with the fruit, and to play peaceably. She then called Betty, and gave her directions for the dinner, which, upon the Sabbath, was a grand affair, as Mr. Langdon dined with his family but once in a week. Afterwards she followed her husband to the parlor, where he dozed away the time until dinner, believing, as he often remarked, that the Sabbath was intended literally as a day of rest for both body and mind.

When the family met at dinner, the children were so much occupied with their vigorous attempts to allay the hunger which the exercise of the forenoon had created, that the parents had time to discuss various items of domestic intelligence without interruption.

“Did you conclude to go to church, Mary, or shall we take a ride? You know I can’t often find the time for a pleasure excursion through the week.”

“I can do neither,” Mrs. Langdon answered with a sigh. “Angelia informed me before dinner that she had engaged to go out with a friend from the city. This is her day to go, and I could say nothing. So I must stay with the children, unless,” she added, brightening with a sudden thought, “you will order the carryall, and take them with us.”

“Excuse me, my dear; but I hardly feel called upon to exhibit our domestic bliss to the gaze of the curious. Howard would scream, and the baby cry at the top of her voice. I haven’t forgotten our last ride *en famille*.”

But Howard and his sister, whose attention to the subject had been called, by the mention of their names, were not at all satisfied with so summary a settlement of the question, and commenced in unison, “Papa, I want to go; let me go.” “I say,” exclaimed Howard, raising his voice above his sister’s, “it’s my turn, and if any body goes, I *shall*.”

Mrs. Langdon said no more; but her down-

cast look, reminding her husband that she could not leave without them, added to their importunities, at length prevailed; and the afternoon was spent in riding, Howard behaving much better than usual, by a remark from his father as he was getting into the carriage, "Remember, sir, that the first trouble I have with you, I'll set you down in the road, and you may find your way home in the best manner you can. I mean as I say, as you found this morning."

The boy looked so doleful at the thought of being left on the road, that Mr. Langdon was obliged to turn quickly from him, to hide a smile at his son's credulity.

Tea was ready when they returned, and Betty smilingly offered to give the baby her supper, and put her to bed, if they could dispense with her attendance at table.

At an early hour, Mrs. Langdon coaxed Howard and Emeline to allow themselves to be undressed, promising them some money to buy candy, if they would be quiet and not awake

the baby; after which, she joined her husband, who was smoking on a lounge before the house. She was wearied with life, dissatisfied with herself, considered her lot a hard one, and wondered what she should do when the children grew to be older. She forgot that she had a kind husband, a delightful home, and children endowed with every faculty to make them a comfort and a delight, instead of the weariness and annoyance they now were. As she sat there in the bright moonlight, with the cool breeze fanning her heated brow, a good spirit whispered words of cheer — of a time when other motives would actuate her, and when she could look into the future with feelings of hope and trust.

CHAPTER II.

HOWARD'S GOVERNESS.

His Anger. — His Punishment. — His good Resolution. —
His new Governess. — Happy Result of her Instruction.

A MONTH later, after a Sabbath passed very much like the one we have described, Angelia was undressing Master Howard, who resisted her with all his might. He had long ago forgotten the lesson his father intended to teach by the summary punishment he had inflicted, and had become even more unruly and obstinate than before.

Angelia held his arm by force while she pulled off his jacket, when he suddenly gave her a violent blow in her eye with the arm which was free. She staggered back, and would have fallen, had not Mrs. Langdon, who had entered unperceived, caught her, and led her to a seat. The

blood streamed from her nose, and her mistress was exceedingly frightened at her appearance. She ran to the head of the stairs, called loudly for her husband, and represented the scene as she had witnessed it in glowing colors; while Howard was standing behind the door, very much alarmed at the effects of his hasty temper.

Mr. Langdon, in much excitement, took his son by the arm, and led him to a dark closet, where he shut him up, telling him he was going for a policeman to put him in jail.

I will not stop to describe at length the terror experienced by the poor boy, as he was left hour after hour to reflect upon his conduct. His heart beat wildly at every sound, expecting the officers of justice. Then he would sink back, trembling from head to foot, and wonder if they would hang him for what he had done.

But I will turn to the father and mother, who, after administering to the poor girl's relief, left her with Betty, and descended to the parlor with heavy hearts. Mrs. Langdon felt discour-

aged. Mr. Langdon was angry, and declared he would send his son to a boarding school. He would not have such an unruly boy in the house. He was the torment of their lives.

Mrs. Langdon disapproved of boarding schools, though she could not tell why; but she agreed with her husband that something *must* be done. She had an indistinct idea that neither of them had fulfilled all their duty towards their children, and she sighed at the thought.

They were interrupted by Angelia, who came with her eye frightfully swollen, to say that she was going to the city. She would not remain an hour longer in the house with a boy so rude and insolent as Howard. Mr. Langdon paid her the wages which were her due without a word, and she departed, saying, "If it was only Miss Emeline and the baby, I would have liked to remain through the summer."

"Shall I release Howard?" inquired Mrs. Langdon, when they were alone.

"Yes; I rather think he is pretty well sub-

duced by this time. That was a lucky hit of mine about a jail; I saw he cowered under it."

The lady was leaving the room, but she turned back to say, "I don't think, Charles, it has a good effect to frighten children. I have read in books about its injurious tendency."

"Well, *well*," resumed her husband, "tomorrow I shall decide what to do with him; I don't think any harm will come of it for once."

When Mrs. Langdon approached the closet, all was so still that she quickened her pace, fearing the worst consequence from the close confinement. When she opened the door, she could at first see nothing of the boy, who was crouched down behind a trunk. But as soon as he saw his mother, he sprang forward, and, putting his arms convulsively around her neck, kissed her again and again, sobbing aloud, "O, mamma! if you'll only keep me at home, and not let them carry me to prison, I will be a good boy, and I never, *never* will do so again. I am sorry, mamma; I didn't mean to hurt her

so. Will she die?" he asked, eagerly looking in his mother's face.

Mrs. Langdon pressed him to her heart as she had not done for years, while the tears streamed down her cheeks. "My dear Howard," she said, when she could speak, "you shall not go away from home; at least, not to jail. But why can't you be a good boy?"

"I will, mother, *I will*. Try me, mamma; see how good I can be."

Mrs. Langdon led him to his room, where she certainly had little reason to complain of him that night, for he went quietly to bed, undressing himself, and hanging his clothes upon the hooks, as Angelia had done.

The next evening, Mr. Langdon returned from town in high spirits. He had consulted his partner, who had suggested a plan with regard to the children, which had impressed him very favorably; and he only waited the consent of his wife to act upon it at once. This was to have a governess, who would take the entire

charge of the children. Mr. Ames, his partner, had recommended a young lady, who was visiting at his house, the daughter of a former friend, who, he said, was so independent in her feelings, that she would not accept a home with them, but wished a situation as governess in a family.

“ I was so pleased with his account,” continued Mr. Langdon, “ that I went to see her.”

“ And will she come ? ” inquired Mrs. Langdon, her countenance exhibiting the most lively interest.

“ Yes, I tried to persuade her to come home with me to-night ; but she said she should prefer to see you first, and make some necessary arrangements. So I promised to bring you in to-morrow. You can carry Emeline and the baby, and drive her home ; I will return in the omnibus.”

“ Delightful ! ” exclaimed Mrs. Langdon ; “ and I can take the opportunity to inquire at the office for a nurse-maid. Do you think the children will like it ? ”

“I don't think Howard will at first; I told Mr. Ames what he did, last evening, and that I was afraid a lady couldn't manage him; but he said Miss Nesbitt had a great degree of firmness, and would do vastly better than a master for such a boy. He said she would be a charming companion for you.

“I told the lady that she should have unlimited control over the children. She asked if we had a room which we could appropriate for the school; and I told her she should choose from any in the house, not excepting the parlors.

“Mrs. Ames laughed at me for my enthusiasm, and said it was easy to see I had not the ideas of a governess, which were too prevalent in these days. I told her I must be candid, and say that Miss Nesbitt's situation was not likely to be a sinecure, and that every thing we could do to render it more agreeable should be done with great pleasure.”

The next morning, Mrs. Langdon accompanied her husband to the city, taking with her the

two younger children, — as she had only a young girl with whom to leave them, — who had come in for a few days until they could procure a nurse. As it was early, she wished to proceed at once to the Intelligence Office; but Mr. Langdon said Miss Nesbitt would expect her, and they drove directly to Mr. Ames's. Before noon, she had arranged her business so much to her satisfaction, that she started for home, accompanied not only by the new governess, but also by a tidy, good-tempered girl, whose joy at going to live with her dear Miss Anna (as she called Miss Nesbitt) was alternately expressed by smiles and tears.

After her call upon that lady, Mrs. Langdon mentioned that she wished to procure a good nurse, when Miss Nesbitt said she knew of one, whom she could recommend as being neat, obliging, and honest. “She formerly lived in my father's family,” continued she, eagerly, “and was here yesterday to ask my advice about a place.” Mrs. Ames kindly offered to send at

once for the girl, who was delighted to go with her old friend ; and thus Mrs. Langdon's wants had been fully supplied. Maria (the nurse) soon coaxed Lucy from her mother's arms, and that lady arrived at home with a light heart.

From this period, a new era commenced in the family. Mrs. Langdon, delighted to be free from the responsibility for which she felt herself unfit, showered favors upon the teacher, whose influence from the commencement had been so happy. A large, sunny chamber had been fitted up for the school, and Mr. Langdon had given Miss Nesbitt *carte blanche* as to the expense of furnishing it with the proper apparatus.

Howard, at first, looked at the governess in the light of one who had come to infringe upon his rights and privileges ; but, before he was aware, he was earnestly begging the privilege of accompanying her in a walk, offering to carry a basket which she held for wild flowers. Emeline, who was naturally an amiable child, loved Miss Nesbitt with all her heart, while the baby,

with her careful, merry nurse, crowed and shouted with delight.

I would not convey the idea that there was any sudden change in Howard or Emeline. Their moral education had been entirely neglected. They had never been taught to restrain their passions, nor obliged to do any thing unpleasant. It required but a very short time for Miss Nesbitt to see the difficulties she would have to encounter; and often, during the first month of her residence in the family, would she retire at night ready to believe that she was doing no good—that the task was hopeless. Howard was restive under the slightest restraint, and often very passionate; Emeline was indolent in the extreme, and could hardly be brought to fix her attention for one moment. But with every fresh dawn came hope, pointing its finger to a bright future, and courage again filled this kind teacher's heart.

After being nearly a week in the family, Miss Nesbitt, observing the disorderly conduct of the

children at meals, and unwilling to reprove them in the presence of their parents, had requested to be allowed a separate table for herself and her charge, at breakfast and supper, until they could learn some rules of decorum. The honor of dining with papa upon the Sabbath was held up as a reward for good conduct through the week.

At first, Howard scouted the idea of that as a reward; but after being obliged to eat alone for two successive Sabbaths, he was very much pleased with his teacher's remark, on Saturday evening, that he had earned the privilege of sitting at the table with his father; and she should now be proud to show him what a gentleman his son had become.

One of the greatest hinderances to her progress, however, was, in her estimation, the thoughtless remarks of Mr. and Mrs. Langdon in the presence of their offspring. Few parents realize fully the extent of this kind of influence upon their children. They teach them to be honest,

and then discuss before them the character of a man, shrewd and calculating, who does not hesitate to turn a penny to his own advantage; and then, with an expressive nod, or shrug of the shoulders, say, "He'll make his way in the world; he'll be a rich man yet."

They teach their children to be truthful, and allow them to see themselves entertaining a visitor with apparent delight, urge him to repeat his call, expressing the great pleasure it will give them; but no sooner has he gone than they hear them say, "What a bore such a person is! I hope I never shall see his face again."

Mr. and Mrs. Langdon were truly kind-hearted, amiable people. Mr. Langdon was an active, enterprising merchant, who scorned to do a mean action, or to take advantage of a man who was in his power, while his wife was naturally sprightly and agreeable; but they had never considered themselves accountable to God for the training of the souls committed to their care. They did not remember the divine precept,

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

But Miss Nesbitt had been taught in the school of affliction. She knew that the seeds of passion, of self-will, of disobedience, and of indolence, in her pupils, had been nurtured by neglect and indulgence, until they had produced “plants of a sturdy growth,” and that unless they were pulled up by the roots they would yield bitter fruit. She therefore devoted herself most earnestly and untiringly to their moral culture. She took a class in the Sabbath school, and they were among her pupils. She taught them the commands of God, and illustrated their meaning by simple tales, bringing the truth she wished to teach to bear upon their hearts and consciences. In a very short time they awoke to the knowledge of their accountability to God for all the actions they performed.

Then she brought into use an elegant illuminated Bible, which had hitherto lain neglected upon the parlor table. She read with such pa-

thos, explaining the beautiful engravings, that not only Howard and Emeline, but their parents, listened with delight. Mr. Langdon came with his cigar from the portico into the hall, then stood at the door, and finally threw it away, and lay upon the lounge, where he could hear every word.

“Do come here, Charles,” exclaimed Mrs. Langdon, one Sabbath afternoon; “see this beautiful plate; that is Joseph, and his brothers are letting him down into the pit.” Mr. Langdon joined her, and stood behind Miss Nesbitt’s chair; and while the teacher went on with the affecting history, both husband and wife listened with moistened eyes and earnest attention.

CHAPTER III.

THE HAPPY CHANGE.

The Journey.—Howard's Excursion.—His Thoughts, suggested by a Visit to the State Prison.—His Sickness.—His Parents' Anxiety.—His early Death.—The happy Result of this Affliction.

WEEKS flew by, until autumn came with its golden fruit, its gayly-colored flowers, and its gorgeously-tinted forests. Mr. and Mrs. Langdon had determined to go a journey, which had been postponed from spring to fall, and from fall to spring, for many years. Miss Nesbitt, whom all the family now regarded as a dear friend, was to take charge during their absence.

"My dear Anna," said Mrs. Langdon, at parting, "order the carriage, and go where you please, and when you please; consider the house and every thing in it at your disposal. We have no fears about the children, for, as Charles

said to me last night, it was a fortunate day for us when you came to our house. We needed instruction as well as our children.

Howard and Emeline stood, each holding a hand of their beloved teacher, while Lucy was in the arms of her smiling nurse, and Betty, in her neat white apron, waved her hand, as they drove away, saying, "And it's good luck we'll be wishing ye'es till the day we see your welcome faces back in your own home."

In the care and society of her now loved pupils, Miss Nesbitt felt no loneliness. Long ere this, they had formed habits of obedience to her wishes, and had become accustomed to their regular sessions for study. Six hours every day were passed in the school room, but so varied were their recitations that they never tired.

Indeed, Howard would often beg for longer lessons, he had become so much interested in his studies. No one would have recognized in the gentle boy, walking gracefully by the side of his teacher, in her daily rambles, looking in

her face and answering her questions, with a countenance full of animation, the rude, boisterous lad whom we introduced in the commencement of our story.

Miss Nesbitt herself regarded the change with astonishment, and was often surprised at the nature of his inquiries, showing a mind thirsting for knowledge. If she acknowledged to herself any partiality for her pupils, it was for the ardent, affectionate Howard, who was now influenced by her slightest look, and who was grieved beyond measure by her reproof, however mildly spoken. Emeline, to be sure, was younger, but she was naturally averse to exertion of any kind, and it required constant incitements to her duties to induce any thing like a regular performance of them.

During the absence of their parents, Miss Nesbitt accompanied the children to many places of interest. She followed a plan, which she had made with Mr. Langdon's full approbation, to join a select school kept by a friend in the city,

and to visit with them the iron works, the glass factory, the navy yard, and the state prison. The latter, more than any other place, was a source of interest to Howard. He was pale with the intensity of his feelings. But he kept tight hold of Miss Nesbitt's hand, as they followed the chaplain from one room to another, and witnessed the neatness and order of every part of the establishment, and the general look of comfort among the prisoners. He spoke not a word at the time; but his teacher was very much affected that night, after their return home, at hearing his voice in prayer, thanking God that he had not been left to the indulgence of angry passions, and to go to prison. Wishing to learn further the impression the scene had made upon his mind, she called him to her, and began to talk to him. But his heart was too full, and he burst into tears, saying, as he threw his arms around her neck, "*Dear, dear* Miss Nesbitt. If you had not come here to teach me how wicked it is to be angry, I should have

been there too. And I cannot help being so sorry those poor people had no one to teach them. They, too, might have learned to be good. Wouldn't Jesus let them into heaven if they would be good now?"

"Yes, *yes*, my own dear boy," said Miss Nesbitt, unable to restrain her tears, as she pressed him in her arms. "He wants them to come to him; you know he died to save them, and if they would only love him, they would go to live with him in that happy world."

"And will nobody tell them so? O Miss Nesbitt, though I don't know what Emeline and I could do without you, yet I almost want you to go and tell them they can become good if they will but try. It's very hard at first; but they can do it. You might say," he continued, blushing deeply, and looking down, "if they wouldn't believe you, that you knew a very wicked boy, who had such a bad temper that every body was afraid of him, but that now he never was angry, and that he was trying every day to be good."

It was some time before the weeping teacher could reply. She felt repaid for all her watchfulness, all her care. This was the reward for which she had so arduously labored. She comforted her pupil with the thought that many were engaged in the work of teaching the poor convicts, that a chaplain was appointed to labor for their good, and that many had left their confinement, at the expiration of their term of imprisonment, better and wiser men than they had entered it, with new purposes and motives of action for the regulation of their future lives.

The winter passed quietly and pleasantly away. It was now spring, though the bleak winds of March detained Miss Nesbitt and her pupils indoors. For a few days Howard had been rather unwell; and even if the weather had been mild, his teacher would have been reluctant to leave him. She sat by his side as he lay upon a couch, bathed his temples, and at times read to him in a low voice, to soothe his pain.

The boy was so patient and uncomplaining that his parents did not feel alarm at his illness; but his teacher perceived that he grew rapidly worse, and said she thought a physician should be summoned. Mr. Langdon, accustomed to act entirely by her advice wherever the children were concerned, sent at once for a doctor, who pronounced it the scarlet fever, and advised the parents to remove the other children as far as possible from the sick room of their brother.

Mr. and Mrs. Langdon were exceedingly alarmed, and in their fright were rendered almost unable to do any thing for the comfort of their dear boy. Miss Nesbitt, too, was very anxious about the result of this sickness; but she immediately applied herself to the duties of a nurse. Though extremely pale, she received the doctor's directions with calmness, showing him that she understood them, and would see that they were obeyed.

But, notwithstanding all the skill of the physician, the untiring watchfulness of the devoted

and loving teacher, the tears of the stricken parents, the patient grew worse, and soon there was no hope of his recovery. For three days and nights Miss Nesbitt had not left him except for a few moments at a time, to take her meals. The kind-hearted Betty, as well as Maria, had done all they could to lighten her cares; but the sick boy watched her every movement, and looked up lovingly in her face, when he found it no longer possible to articulate his thanks for her kindness; and she could not leave him.

At almost every hour of the day or night she could hear the poor afflicted father walking the hall, with agitated steps, while the weeping mother would come in, begging Miss Nesbitt to allow her to do something for her darling boy. But her feelings, at the sight of his distress, would so overcome her that she was unable to administer to his relief.

This was their first real sorrow, and it fell heavily upon Mr. and Mrs. Langdon. The father had long regarded his son with pride and

affection, and had begun to form plans for the future, in all of which his only boy was to share a prominent part. From the conscientiousness, the strict observance of the Sabbath which he had witnessed in his son, the father had taken many a lesson which he would not have condescended to receive from any other.

These lessons he was now pondering ; and though every fibre of his heart was quivering with anguish at the thought that in a very few hours his beautiful boy would be no more, yet he could but acknowledge to himself that there was a principle within the patient sufferer, influencing his thoughts and feelings, enabling him to look forward with glorious anticipations to a home in the skies, to which he was an entire stranger. O, with what an agony of remorse did he look back upon his total neglect of the moral training of his children ! How vividly now stood out before him the painful Sabbath when, with anger at his heart, he had chastised his boy for disobedience brought on by his own sinful neg-

lect! How he wept over and cherished every act of love the boy had of late shown him, every expression of affection he had received! How he wept afresh as he remembered he should hear them no more!

The physician came again. He had visited his patient three or four times in a day. He had administered the most powerful medicine; but all was of no avail. The decree had gone forth; and the dear boy, about whom were clustered so many precious recollections, the first-born and only son, must die.

Father and mother were bending over him in uncontrolled agitation and grief. Betty and Maria were standing at the foot of the bed, stifling their sobs in their aprons. The kind physician was wetting the parched lips; the loved teacher, sitting behind the dying child, supported him in her arms, while his head was resting against her breast. He appeared to be unconscious; but at length he revived, opened his eyes languidly, then gazed around as if he knew them, and after

moistening his mouth tried to speak. At first he could not articulate, but slowly and feebly he raised his hand and drew his father's face near to his own.

"Dear papa," he said, in a hoarse whisper, "I want you to forgive all the naughty things I used to do, and I want you to ask Miss Nesbitt, and she'll tell you how to be good, so you can come to heaven, and see me there. I've asked God, for Christ's sake, to forgive all my sins, and to make me good; and now I'm going to live with him forever."

"Dear, *dear* Howard!" exclaimed the poor father, shaking from head to foot with his emotion. "I have prayed all day that I might be prepared to follow you. But, O, it's hard to give you up!"

With a look of unutterable love the boy slowly closed his eyes, but after a few moments signified his desire to speak to his mother, when he begged her to prepare for heaven, and never to let Miss Nesbitt go away, for he wanted her

to teach his sisters as she had taught him. She could only weep as she bowed her assent, and was withdrawing, so that the doctor could approach, when he spoke again, though with great difficulty.

“Will you please find Angelia, and ask her to forgive me for striking her, and tell her I’ve been sorry a great while?”

Mr. Langdon groaned aloud, and retired hastily from the room. The dying boy lay for a few moments with his eyes closed, greatly exhausted by the exertion he had made, when he suddenly started as if he had seen a bright vision, his whole face was radiant with joy, and without a struggle or a groan his spirit departed.

The afflicted, bereaved mother bent over the lifeless body in agony of spirit; but the physician gently tried to soothe her grief, and begged her to go below to her husband. He had noticed the extreme pallor of Miss Nesbitt’s countenance, and was anxious to relieve her by removing the body from her arms. He did so, and was pleased

to see that her grief found its natural vent in tears. She had through all the trying scenes restrained every manifestation of emotion, that she might not be disabled from administering to her beloved charge; but now she wept freely, and as she wept her heart rose up to God in prayer that this heavy affliction might be the means of spiritual life to the bereaved parents. She had earnestly hoped for a parting word from the dying boy, but she was satisfied. He was happy, and she felt that for him she could ask no more.

Leaving the physician with a kind neighbor to perform the last offices for the deceased, she joined the weeping parents, who appeared almost stunned with the violence of the blow. She would have much preferred to be alone; but she had duties to perform, and wearied and faint as she was, she would not shrink from them.

When she entered the parlor, Mr. Langdon was sitting on the sofa with his face concealed in his handkerchief, while his trembling frame showed the violence of his grief. Mrs. Langdon

was sitting near her husband sobbing convulsively. She looked up as Miss Nesbitt entered, and motioned her to a seat by her side, when her sobs burst out afresh. For a time they wept in silence. At length Mr. Langdon arose, and advancing to Miss Nesbitt, though his countenance wore the hue of death, said in a husky voice, "You heard the dying request: will you tell me what to do?"

For a moment the young lady was very much embarrassed; but she arose, and going to the table, said, "I will read, in answer to your question, a few words from this holy book, which had become so precious to the dear boy." Her voice failed; but after a short pause she read a few verses from the fifty-first Psalm, and also from Isaiah fifty-third, after which, becoming very faint from her long watching, she was about to leave the room; but Mr. Langdon, taking her by the hand, said, "Anna, you taught our boy to pray for his parents: will you not pray for them too?"

“I can, *I will*,” she replied earnestly; “but let me beg you to pray for yourselves, that God would sanctify this great affliction to your souls.” Then, feeling entirely overcome by her emotion, she hastened to her room.

The day of the funeral came and passed — friends and relatives had come to sympathize in the bitter sorrow of the bereaved parents, and had taken their departure; but Anna Nesbitt had never been able to leave her room. She was suffering from an attack of the same complaint which had so suddenly carried off her dear pupil.

The attack, however, was slight compared with his; and Anna, who greatly feared for the other members of the family, entreated that she might be left to the care of Maria, who was abundantly able to perform all the services she should require.

Her grateful friend was very unwilling to leave her at all; but Anna tried to convince her that her presence was not at all necessary, and that her duty to her family forbade the exposure; and as the doctor coincided in the opinion, she un-

willingly consented to the arrangement, though she was continually knocking at the door with messages of anxiety from herself and her husband, begging her to give them something to do for her, that they might express their affection and gratitude.



"Kneeling on the floor before the little stranger, is Anna Nesbitt, chatting in the most approved style of baby-talk." P. 59.

CHAPTER IV.

DOMESTIC SCENES.

The little Stranger.—Its warm Welcome.—Betty's Skill as Nurse.—Change in Mr. and Mrs. Langdon.—Another Sabbath.—Bible Stories.—The happy Family.

A YEAR passed by: it was again spring; but the air was mild, and the weather had become settled. Let us pay another visit to our friends Mr. and Mrs. Langdon. We enter the parlors, but find them unoccupied: a merry shout of childhood reaches us from the room above, and we ascend the stairs, where a pleasant scene awaits us. Sitting in a low rocking chair before the fire is Maria, with an infant in her arms, who, with its bare feet extended toward the blaze, is showing, in a manner peculiar to babyhood, the pleasure it derives from the heat.

Kneeling on the floor before the little stranger is Anna Nesbitt, chatting in the most approved

style of baby talk to the young master, who answers by a musical cooing, fully understood and appreciated by all around him.

Mrs. Langdon, the happy mother, sits by in a large easy chair, while Betty is combing out her long auburn tresses, and proving herself a very mesmerizer in the soothing influence of her hair-dressing. Little Lucy, whom we left a baby, is shouting with glee at the high towers her sister built with her blocks, and which she tumbles over with a noise almost too loud for mamma. Emeline alternately runs to Maria to hear the wonderful story the baby is telling, or rebuilds the castle Lucy has so unceremoniously thrown down.

"Be quick now," said Mrs. Langdon, for Betty too has stopped to listen to the young master. "Mr. Langdon will be here presently, and he would think me late at my toilet if he should find my hair undressed."

"And sure," replied Betty, laughing, as she proceeded to gather up the hair into a braid,

“he can’t be displeased aither; for it’s handsome as a doll ye’re looking this blessed minute.”

“There’s where I agree with you,” said a fine manly voice from behind the chair; and Betty gave “a lep out of her,” as she afterwards expressed it, “to see the master standing close at hand.”

“O, there’s papa!” shouted Emeline and Lucy in chorus, while Anna called him to observe the wonderful progress his son had made in talking, since he left in the morning.

After giving his wife and baby a kiss, Mr. Langdon said he had brought an interesting book from town, and if agreeable to the ladies, he would read aloud, provided the children would play quietly. For the next hour not a word was spoken by the little folks above a whisper, though the baby did not regard the direction, but continued his pleasant song, which grew fainter and fainter until he fell quietly asleep in the arms of his nurse.

It is again the Sabbath eve. Though the day has been sultry, a cool breeze has sprung up, which Mr. Langdon remarks to his wife will probably blow up a shower. Far more than the Sabbath before described, this has been a day of rest—of rest from all worldly employments and enjoyments, and rest even, compared with the former day, from physical exertion and fatigue. In this now happy, united family, the Sabbath has become “the day of all the week the best,” and its sacred, hallowed influences extend far beyond the hours set apart for holy rest. At the usual hour for breakfast the family assemble about the cheerful repast, and even little Lucy has now learned to conduct herself with strict propriety while there. Howard, the dear child, who is now singing praises before the throne of the Eternal, is not forgotten. When they gather around the family altar he is remembered, and his memory cherished with the fondest affection. The family then retire to their rooms, when Emeline prepares her Sabbath-school lesson with

her teacher. Mr. Langdon also has taken a class of boys, and at nine o'clock the three ride to church, which is nearly a mile distant. As Mrs. Langdon is in delicate health, she is seldom able to go out more than half a day. Directly after church in the afternoon the family assemble in the parlor, and it is there we would now meet them.

The pale but beautiful mother sits in a low easy chair, with her infant lying quietly across her lap. There is an expression of peace and quiet happiness upon her lovely countenance which in vain we looked for in former years. Her heart reposes securely upon the Rock of Ages. Miss Nesbitt occupies a seat on the sofa, where Lucy has nestled herself close to her side, and has made prisoner of her dear Anna's hand, as she has learned to call her friend. Miss Nesbitt puts her arm about the ardent, impulsive child who so often reminds her of the dear one who has gone, and is answered by a fond look, and a warm kiss upon the hand she holds

so tightly in her own. Maria and Betty sit near each other by the door, while Mr. Langdon has drawn his chair to the table in the centre of the room, and is opening the large Bible lying before him. Emeline sits in her father's lap with one arm thrown around his neck. It is her privilege to look over the book with him as he reads.

"Well, my daughter, can you remember what I am to tell you to-night?"

"O, yes, papa! the last time it was about Jacob and Rachel; see, here is the picture. Don't you remember you said it was very mean in Laban to make Jacob marry Leah, when he loved Rachel best, and that you would have made a fuss about it?"

The childish remark caused a smile around the whole circle; and Mr. Langdon replied pleasantly, "I see, my dear, I must be careful what impressions I convey, if you remember them so distinctly. Yes, I remember saying, I should hardly have submitted so peaceably to the injustice as the patriarch seems to have done, though, no

doubt, he was greatly disappointed. But now we come to Joseph."

"O, I'm so glad! I'm never tired of hearing about Joseph, and Anna says that was Howard's favorite story."

A shade of sadness passed over the manly countenance as his mind recurred to the past, while his wife, with a tearful eye, asked, "Do you remember, Charles, when Anna first came to us, and was telling the children that beautiful story, how pleased Howard was that you and I came in to listen to it?"

"Yes, Mary, I shall never forget it, or the remark you made, Anna, after the children had left the room. I said, 'You have a wonderful faculty, Miss Nesbitt, for interesting children, and I see they obey you cheerfully and promptly. Where did you find rules which work such wonders?' You replied, 'The only rules I have I obtained from this precious book, and they are adapted to the wants of every family.' That night, after all had retired, I came in here, and for more

than an hour read from these sacred pages, and then determined to devote myself to the education of my children as I had never yet done."

"And nobly have you redeemed your promise," rejoined Anna earnestly, her eyes humid with tears; "and I am sure you will receive the blessing promised to those who train up their children in the way they should go."

After the reading and singing the whole family repeated in unison the Lord's prayer, when Mr. Langdon closed by an appropriate expression of thanks for mercies received, and especially that the sudden death of their first-born, though at the time an affliction grievous to be borne, yet had, as he humbly hoped, yielded the peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who had been exercised thereby.

CHAPTER V.

THE TEACHER'S MARRIAGE.

Mr. Stephens. — Miss Nesbitt's new Home. — Her Reception. — Difference between Ronald and his Sisters. — The Bride's Trial.

It is time to give my young readers some more particular account of Miss Nesbitt. She was, as I have already stated, a simple-hearted, earnest Christian. Her features were not regular, neither could she be designated as handsome; but those who knew her best considered her so, for her happy countenance and cheerful, contented disposition carried sunshine wherever she went. Soon after the death of her father, Anna resided for a time with a distant relative of her mother, who would gladly have given her a home for the rest of her life. But the young lady, who had only a small income from her father's estate,

was of too independent a spirit to be willing to remain where she saw no way in which she could compensate her friends for their kindness ; and therefore, in compliance with her earnest request, Mr. Ames mentioned to some of his acquaintances her wish to become a teacher. In the course of a few months, she was thus established as governess in the family of his young partner, Mr. Langdon.

Among the visitors at the house of this gentleman was a lawyer, named Stephens, who lived about a quarter of a mile distant, and who had an office in the neighboring city. During the second year of Miss Nesbitt's residence in the family of his neighbor, his wife died, leaving three children — two girls, of the ages of ten and twelve, and a bright, active boy, of five.

Mrs. Stephens was in youth a gay belle, rather haughty and imperious in her bearing, but possessed of the most devoted tenderness for her husband and children. During the frequent interchange of visits and calls between the families,

she saw much of the young governess, and remonstrated with Mrs. Langdon for allowing Anna to be so familiar as to come into the room to receive, and, in the absence of her mistress, entertain, her visitors. In vain her friend assured her that Anna had been educated to fill a far different position in society, that her father was a distinguished lawyer, and that she was considered by them in the light of a kind benefactor. The lady had been too long accustomed to consider a governess as a sort of upper servant to sympathize at all in these feelings. Anna could not help being aware that Mrs. Stephens regarded her as an inferior, and, whenever it was possible, avoided being in her society.

After her decease, Mr. Stephens visited Mr. Langdon still more frequently, as he nowhere else found such warm sympathy. For many months, however, he saw but little of Anna, as his entering the parlor was the signal for her leaving it. But in winter, when the family were seated together about the centre table, Mrs. Langdon in-

sisted that she would not give up so much of her society. She would far sooner expel their bereaved friend from the house. To prevent this, Anna reluctantly consented to remain in the parlor, supposing Mr. Stephens's feelings in regard to her to be in sympathy with those of his deceased wife.

After this, Mr. and Mrs. Langdon could not help remarking how much more interesting and animated their friend had become. Anna, too, thought that he was a singularly gifted man. Whenever, as was often the case of late, the conversation turned upon the subject of education, her friends referred, at once, to her, saying, "All we know, she has taught us;" and thus, at the end of the year, Anna found herself advising Mr. Stephens upon this or that course with regard to his children.

One evening he called when Mr. and Mrs. Langdon were absent from home. The teacher had been accompanying herself in some simple tunes for the pleasure of the children, and was

just bidding them good night, when the door opened and Mr. Stephens entered. He stood one moment surveying the pleasant home scene, before Anna could disengage herself from the arms of the ardent Lucy, and then deliberately seated himself.

"I am sorry," said Anna, as she quietly resumed her sewing, wholly unconscious of the tumult in the breast of her companion, "that Mr. and Mrs. Langdon are away."

Mr. Stephens coughed and hemmed. He was a distinguished advocate, but somehow, as he sat there twirling his hat in his hands, he found that it was much easier to plead another's cause than his own.

After a moment, Anna arose and passed him the North American Review, referring, as she did so, to an article which had much interested her.

He carelessly turned over the pages without looking at them, being much more interested in a train of thought, whereby he and his present companion were transferred to his own parlor, and he at liberty to address her by the endearing title of *wife*.

Anna began to feel rather awkward, and said, "I think Mrs. Langdon intended to remain the entire evening. They would not have gone had they expected you."

"Miss Nesbitt," said the lawyer, suddenly determining to embrace the present opportunity to make known his wishes, "I have for some time been seeking a teacher, and have at length decided to apply to you."

"For your children?" asked Anna, in surprise. "I thought you were decided to send the little girls to their aunt."

"No, Miss Nesbitt, for myself," and he advanced to a seat by her side. "I am quite as ignorant as my friends were when you came to bless them with your joyous presence." He dropped his voice to a lower key, and a certain trembling which he noticed in Anna's hand, as she vainly attempted to continue her sewing, showed that, even when the subject concerned himself, he had not lost his power to interest his auditor.

It will easily be believed that the young lady did not interrupt him ; but, when he ceased, she told him frankly that the subject had never once suggested itself to her mind ; but she had learned, in the course of their acquaintance to regard him as a dear friend, and she begged time to think of his proposal, and liberty to consult her friends.

It is not necessary to go further into detail. In the month of June they were married, and Anna Stephens entered upon her new duties as a wife and a mother. At her request the little girls had been summoned home before her marriage, since she rightly thought, the younger they were, the more easy it would be to secure their confidence and affection. On the first day of her return from the wedding tour, she found that, from some indiscreet remarks to them, they had acquired a violent prejudice against her in the relation of step-mother.

Having seen them frequently in connection with their parents, the young mother was prepared to take them to her heart, and to fulfil

toward them, as far as in her power, the duties resulting from such a relation. But when, on alighting from the carriage and entering the pleasant parlor, Mr. Stephens took the hand of Emily, the eldest, and led her reluctantly forward to salute her new mother, she snatched away her hand, saying, "I don't want her for my mother; I had rather not have any." Jenny, the next one, appeared fully to sympathize with her sister, for she burst into a loud cry.

Mr. Stephens was intensely mortified at this reception, and sternly dismissed them to separate chambers.

Master Ronald, who had run in from the garden as the carriage approached, and who had been watching with no little anxiety the countenance of his new relative, now drew near, and cordially putting his hand in hers, exclaimed, "I say, will you let me drive my hoop and play ball when I have got my lessons? Because John Hawkes says his new mother won't, and he hates her. But I told him I was going to

ask you, and perhaps you was not cross, like her."

"Yes, my frank little fellow," replied Anna, moved almost to tears by the anxiety with which he gazed in her face, as if his whole happiness for life was at stake; "yes, you shall play, and I will play too. I am a fine hand at throwing ball; we will try it after supper; and I know a great many other pleasant games. So you may tell Johnny that we intend to have merry times."

With almost a scream of delight the boy asked, "O, may I go now? It will take me only a few minutes."

"Yes, but kiss me first."

Ronald put his arms around her neck, to the ruin of her nicely-starched collar, and gave her, as he said, "a whole lot of kisses;" after which he started on a full run out of the gate, and they could hear him calling at the top of his voice, "Johnny! Johnny Hawkes, I want to tell you something!"

The father turned from the window with a

grateful smile, and said, "You have secured his confidence forever." But his brow grew stern, as he added, "What shall I do with my obstinate girls? Some one has been filling their minds with prejudice to the relation."

"It will require time and patience to remove it," answered the bride, "but I do not despair. I dare say we shall be good friends yet. Have I your permission to go to them?"

"Certainly, certainly; I give them entirely up to you."

"I cannot accept such a charge, my dear husband," said Anna, quietly removing her bonnet and shawl, and preparing to follow the children to their rooms. "You have the duties of a father to fulfil yet. I have only come to take the place of their deceased mother. We must act in concert, or we shall be wanting in success."

"I am ashamed to say," resumed Mr. Stephens, "that I never have had much to do with the government of my children. Their mother

was very indulgent, and since her death they have done pretty much as they pleased."

"I do not wonder, then, at their unwillingness to receive one whom they suppose will restrain them," she replied, with a sad smile.

"You see, Anna," said her husband, "that I told you truly when I said I needed a teacher."

After being introduced by a tidy housemaid to her own chamber, the new mother proceeded to another, where, from the loud crying, she supposed one of the young girls was confined. Without waiting to knock at the door, she silently entered, and found Emily sitting on the side of the bed, and indulging the most passionate grief. A few words served to convince Mrs. Stephens that the present was no time for conversation with her, and she left the room and knocked at the next door. Jenny was standing near the window, weeping bitterly. When her mother approached her, she covered her face with her hand.

CHAPTER VI.

THE STEP-MOTHER.

The Game at Ball.—The Children's Delight.—Emily's Astonishment.—The new Mother's Victory.—Johnny Hawkes and his Step-Mother.—Mr. Stephens's Pleasure in the new Mode of Discipline.—Emily's Procrastination.

“COME, my little daughter,” said the young mother; “we are intending to have a fine game at ball in the garden after tea, and I want you to join us. I have requested permission of your father to talk with you, and I think, if you come to this sink and bathe your eyes, you will be able to take tea with us.”

Jenny gradually uncovered her face, and then suffered herself to be led to the washstand. “Can you play ball?” she asked, timidly, for the first time looking her new mother full in the face.

“O, yes ; I like it very much, and graces too.”

“Can you play battledoor and shuttlecock?”

“Not very well.”

“Then I’ll teach you. I can keep it up ever so many times.”

While they were thus talking, Mrs. Stephens smoothed the dishevelled hair, wiped away the traces of tears, and, to her husband’s amazement, descended to the parlor with her arm about the child’s neck.

“By what witchery have you ——” he commenced ; but a glance from his wife restrained him, and he sat down, eager to see what wonder would happen next. He was taking lessons in earnest that night.

After tea, the bride invited her husband to join her and the children in the garden at a game of ball, and Jenny quickly ran to the play room to obtain her battledoors.

“Are you in earnest?” he whispered, while she was gone.

“Perfectly so ; I expect to enjoy it much,

unless you feel it beneath your dignity," she added, laughing. "In that case you may sit upon the steps as spectator."

"Not at all, my dear; I was only thinking 'twas a novel way to entertain a bride on her first arrival; and if you wish to make the children obey you——"

"I will take care that this shall not diminish my authority, or yours either. So come. Ronald is quite impatient by this time."

The noise of the brother and sister laughing heartily soon brought not only Emily to the window, but the cook, housemaid, and man, to a situation from which they could witness the lively scene.

Emily ceased her crying, and looked on in astonishment. Indeed, she could scarcely believe her eyes. There was her dreaded step-mother engaged in a hearty game with Ronald, who was flushed with the eager desire to display his accomplishments to the best advantage.

"There, I have beat her, father," he cried,

joyfully; "I kept it up longer than Miss Nesbitt did."

"Where is Miss Nesbitt?" asked Anna, turning quickly around; "I didn't know she was here."

They all laughed heartily, and Ronald added, "O, I mean *mother*."

"Now, I propose a forfeit," continued the bride, pausing to take breath; "whoever calls me Miss Nesbitt again this evening shall ——"

"Have a good kissing," interrupted her husband, laughing. "I own guilty; I have detected myself saying so twice."

"No," said she, shaking her head, "something a great deal worse than that. They shall forfeit the privilege of playing to-morrow night. Now you may have a game with Ronald; Jenny is going to teach me battledoor."

"I believe this would cure my dyspepsia," remarked Mr. Stephens, as they entered the house an hour afterwards. "I have not had such a game since I was a boy."

Poor Emily ! A severe conflict was going on within her breast, as she gazed through her tear-blinded eyes upon the happy group below. Vexation, that by her ill temper she had punished only herself—an almost unconquerable desire to throw away her reserve, and join in the pleasant sport—and pride, forbidding her to do so, by turns struggled for mastery. Then, as she saw her new mother stoop to receive a kiss from her impulsive daughter, a pang of jealousy shot through her heart, and she exclaimed, passionately, “She cares nothing for me.”

But here she was mistaken. Scarcely a moment, during the hour and a half that they remained in the garden, had her undutiful daughter been absent from the mother’s thoughts; and often, during a pause in the lively play, did she lift up her heart to her heavenly Father for wisdom to direct her to act rightly. When they reëntered the house, she called her husband aside, and asked, “Shall I go to Emily again to-night?”

“No, no,” he repeated; “give yourself no more trouble about the naughty girl;” but seeing her assume a look of anxiety, he continued, “do as you please, however, but don’t stay long.”

After a moment’s thought, Mrs. Stephens called Jenny, and, bidding her good night, sent a kiss also to her sister, together with a message that they had wished she could have participated in their sport.

The next morning, when the new mother advanced cordially to the young girl to give her a kiss, it was at least politely, if not warmly, returned; and every succeeding day proved that Mrs. Stephens was rapidly advancing in the love and respect of her children.

Before the winter had passed, Johnny Hawkes, as well as his companion Ronald, had cause to bless God for her presence. Complying with the earnest request of her little son, Mrs. Stephens one day visited the mother of his young friend, and found that here was an opportunity for her

to do good. Mrs. Hawkes was a timid and shrinking, but conscientious, young woman, who, without any acquaintance with children, or knowledge of their wants, had been persuaded to assume the responsibilities connected with a large family. Within a year after her marriage another little one was added to her care; and wearied with life, discouraged in the performance of duties she had neither the strength nor ability to fulfil, unaided by the strong arm of her husband, she grew melancholy and reserved, and at length lost all ambition to surmount the numerous obstacles before her.

She was in this state when Mrs. Stephens visited her. It required but a short time to convince the kind lady that the poor woman needed encouragement and advice. She soon found her way to the young mother's heart, by representing their circumstances as similar, and that, perhaps, they might take counsel together with regard to the best interests of their families. When, at the end of an hour, she left

the vine-covered cottage of her humble friend, she had the satisfaction of receiving her tearful thanks, and an earnest invitation to repeat her call.

Though the good step-mother was never subjected to a repetition of such treatment as she received on the first evening of her arrival, yet, as weeks and months passed, she found that much patient instruction would be necessary — much prudence, wisdom, and constant care — to undo the habits which maternal fondness and unlimited indulgence in their own wishes had formed in the objects of her affection. Emily was naturally haughty and overbearing, but untiring in her energy, and, when her better feelings were aroused, generous to an extreme. She was also frank and truthful, and seemed to feel that it was deception for her to treat a person with courtesy when she entertained a secret dislike to such individual.

Jenny, on the contrary, was easy and good-natured in her temperament, extremely impulsive

in her attachments and prejudices, rather indolent, and occasionally given to prevarication to avoid censure or reproof. Ronald was a frank, fearless, warm-hearted boy, sometimes obstinately determined in his own way, but generally easily influenced by those he loved. Towards his new mother he soon exhibited the most devoted fondness. He made her the confidant of all his childish joys and sorrows, applied to her in every difficulty, and regarded her decision as one from which there could be no appeal.

It was Mr. Stephens's delight to relate to his friends the wonders his wife had wrought in his household — especially with Emily, with whom he confessed he had feared to enter into conflict. Now, satisfied that all would go right, he gave himself no further concern, and was soon more than ever absorbed in the business of his profession. In vain his wife, in any important question, directed the children to their father; he always replied, "Go to your mother — she knows best;" and thus threw upon her the whole re-

sponsibility. In this he really supposed he was acting for their good. Under her judicious management he saw them daily improving in good conduct, and in respect towards himself, and, without reflecting upon his own duties to them, he was satisfied that the government should remain in her hands.

Upon one point, however, Mr. and Mrs. Stephens essentially differed, and this was upon the subject of diet. Ronald had always been subjected to severe attacks of sickness, occasioned by indigestion, and his mother soon perceived that the food upon the table was too rich for him. Mr. Stephens was a high liver, and though he dined at a public house in the city, yet was in the habit of procuring all the luxuries of the season for his table at home.

When his wife suggested to him that plainer diet would be far better for the children, he replied, with a laugh, that they had always been used to it, and he did not wish them to be notional. After witnessing one or two attacks

upon his son, which his wife plainly demonstrated to him was the result of improper food, he consented that with Ronald she should use her own judgment.

Even with this permission, his mother found that, without a constant discussion of the subject during the hour devoted to their meals, she was unable to prevent his eating much which she knew was injurious to his health; she therefore, with great reluctance, gave the child his breakfast and supper by himself, and in the course of a few months the effect of this simple and nutritious diet was so evident, that she was able, in a measure, to extend it to her daughters.

One habit into which the children had fallen gave their young mother great solicitude, and this was a want of promptness in their obedience. Even after her authority was fully established, when she bade them do this or that, the answer often was, "In a minute," or, "As soon as I have completed what I am now doing."

For instance: one morning Mrs. Stephens en-

tered the library, and found Emily absorbed in a book, instead of being on her way to school. "Why, my daughter," she said quickly, "I am surprised to see you here — you will be late again."

"I will go in a minute, mamma, as soon as I have finished this page."

"You must go at once, my dear; you were tardy twice yesterday, and you are forming a very bad habit."

Emily cast her eyes over the page, and then reluctantly closed the book, and proceeded to her chamber. Before she again made her appearance the clock struck nine, when she ran into the entry, exclaiming, "O, where did I leave my geography and slate? I shall be late. I know I shall. Will you please write me an excuse, mamma?" she asked, as her mother passed through the hall.

"I don't think you had better wait, my dear."

"The teacher said I must not come again without a billet."

Mrs. Stephens turned to her desk, and wrote a note, which she soon placed in her daughter's hand, who ran with it to the school.

It so happened that on that day Mr. Stephens brought out a friend to dine, and was present when Emily returned at noon. He saw at a glance that something had occurred to disturb her feelings, for her eyes were red with weeping, and, wholly unconscious that any one was within hearing, she threw down her books on the table, and exclaimed, "I hate school, and I never want to go again."

"What is the reason for such an exclamation, my daughter?" asked her father, smiling, as he approached her.

Emily burst into tears, and put into his hand a note from the teacher, and also the excuse she had carried in the morning; then, hearing a voice in the parlor, she ran hastily into the dining room, where her parents followed her.

Mr. Stephens read the notes, and burst into a hearty laugh, which only caused the young lady

to cry the more. "Did you carry this to the teacher?" he asked.

She vouchsafed no reply: but Mrs. Stephens bowed her assent. The note she had carried was as follows:—

"I am sorry to be obliged to write that I can give you no suitable excuse for my daughter's oft-repeated tardiness. Whatever plan you may see fit to adopt to remedy so bad a habit will meet my hearty approbation.

Sincerely yours,

ANNA N. STEPHENS."

Thinking that of course the note given her by her mother was written in the usual form, Emily passed it to her teacher when she entered the school room, and was greatly mortified, as well as displeased, when it was read aloud to the scholars. The teacher wrote a kind reply, thanking Mrs. Stephens for the course she had pursued, and saying she had no doubt it would prove an effectual cure.

“What else could I write, my dear?” expostulated Mrs. Stephens, seeing a dark cloud settling upon the young girl’s brow; “you requested me to give you a billet, and I did so; you surely could not expect or wish that I should tell an untruth, and state that you were necessarily detained.”

“I never thought of that,” replied Emily, taking her handkerchief from her face. “Mother used to write a great many excuses at once, and when I was late I just took one from the drawer.”

Mr. Stephens sighed as he turned to enter the parlor, and said in a low voice to his wife, “You have taught me a good lesson, for which I thank you.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE MOTHER'S REWARD.

Cure of Emily's Fault. — Jenny's Heedlessness. — Her Father's Annoyance. — The School Excursion. — Jenny's Desire to join in it. — Mr. Stephens's Talk with his Daughter. — Ronald in Trouble. — The Mother's Recompense.

THE next morning Mrs. Stephens watched Emily with no small solicitude. She hoped much from the lesson of the previous day with regard to her daughter's improvement in promptness and punctuality. The young girl retired from the table, and entering the library, was soon wholly absorbed in her story. After waiting until it wanted but half an hour to nine, Mrs. Stephens made an errand through the room, when Emily started from her seat, and running to the hall, looked at the clock. She was pleased to find it still so early, and was returning to her seat in the window when her mother asked pleasantly,

“Would it not be safer, my daughter, to prepare for school, and then read until it is time to go?”

“Yes, mamma, I have only one sentence before I shall be through the chapter, and then I will go.”

With a saddened countenance, her mother turned to leave the room, when the impulsive girl, without reading a word, shut her book, and said resolutely, “No, I will go now; I will try not to be tardy again this term.”

In a few moments she returned to the hall, just as Jenny and Ronald were leaving the house; not with the impatient scowl which too often disfigured her face as she hurried away, conscious of having done wrong, but with a bright flush of pleasure animating her whole countenance as she answered her mother’s glance of approbation by a warm kiss. For once, Emily realized the pleasure of having conquered herself, and endeavored to do right. The effect was visible through the entire day. She returned from school both morning and afternoon with the satisfactory informa-

tion that she had been perfect in her lessons, and had received the cordial approval of her teacher.

She was possessed of a discriminating mind, and the different success she met with through the day, when she commenced it with a resolution to be prompt in her duties and punctual in all her engagements, did not fail to make a strong impression upon her. The contest with her mother upon this point was ended; henceforth it was between her new resolves, and her old propensity to procrastination, which led to a superficial performance of her duty.

Mrs. Stephens often remarked to her husband that she was obliged to pursue a different course with each of the children. She studied their characters, and endeavored prayerfully to promote their best interests by a mode of government adapted to their individual dispositions.

In the case of Jenny, the faithful mother found much which was trying to her patience, as well as many amiable traits of character. She was

always sinning and always repenting. She seldom, like her elder sister, gave way to violent emotions; neither could she, like her, be made to understand the necessity of endeavoring to correct herself of habits which, to say the least, were annoying to those around her. Twenty times in a day she ran through the hall, upstairs to her mother's room, and then to her own, leaving every door open behind her, and throwing her bonnet and books on a table or chair, just as proved most convenient. Twenty times in a day her mother said kindly, "Jenny, tie your shoes;" "Jenny, my dear, don't bite your nails."

The young girl answered pleasantly, "Yes, ma'am," or "No, ma'am," as the case might be; but perhaps the next moment the command would be necessarily repeated. Sometimes Mrs. Stephens thought, if she were less yielding, and would come to an open conflict, it would be far easier to manage her, and she should be more hopeful of success; but in her case it needed line

upon line, precept upon precept—a course of discipline which her father had no patience to exercise. Upon the Sabbath he was often so much annoyed with her trifling but constantly recurring misdemeanors, that he frequently reproved her sharply.

Then, with a quivering lip, she was wont to reply, “I did not mean to, papa;” or, “I will not do so again.”

Seeing his wife look grave and serious, he became so uncomfortable that he sent the child from the room until she could behave better. He little realized the chilling effect this treatment would have upon her young heart, or how the pitying glance of her patient mother caused the child to draw near to her with confiding affection. He loved his children, and spared no expense in their education. He gave them every thing but what they most required—a father's watchful care and instruction.

To his only son he was excessively indulgent. The child was a beautiful boy, and one of which

any father might be proud; but his injudicious fondness and open partiality for Ronald were often a source of anxiety to the mother, and caused much jealousy on the part of his sisters. Indeed, Jenny seldom asked a favor directly of her father, but employed her brother to do so for her, knowing he was seldom refused.

One day Mr. and Mrs. Stephens were sitting together in the parlor, when they overheard a conversation in the garden just below them. Jenny had been invited to join the school to which she belonged in a ride to a neighboring town. She was very earnest in her desire to go, but dared not run the risk of refusal by asking leave; and when her parents first heard her voice, she was offering her brother a new India-rubber ball if he would procure the desired permission.

“Why don’t you ask him yourself, Jenny?” inquired the boy.

“Because he wouldn’t let me go if I asked him; he would say, ‘Go to your mother; I have not time to attend to it;’ or else, ‘No, no! There, don’t trouble me.’”

Mrs. Stephens placed her hand on her husband's arm to call his attention; but a flush of displeasure, and a whispered "Nonsense!" convinced her he not only heard, but felt keenly the implied injustice to his child.

"Then why," continued Ronald, "not ask mother at once?"

"I did, and she said in such a case she preferred I should obtain father's consent. Come, do, dear brother," she added, more earnestly, and with something of sadness in her tone; "I know he will give me leave if you ask him. He loves you."

"Well, I will," he answered, "if you will bat the ball for me thirty times."

The father's conscience was disturbed, and he was about to speak angrily; but he met a sorrowful glance from his wife, and saw that her eyes were dewy with tears. "Forgive me, Anna," he said quickly; "but indeed I was vexed at the silly girl."

"Husband," she responded softly, placing her

hand in his, "excuse me for asking, has she not some cause to feel so?" She was interrupted by the appearance of Ronald, who had come upon his sister's mission, and she glanced from him to his father, anxious to know how he would succeed.

The boy soon established himself in his father's lap, and made known his errand.

"Why did not she ask me herself?"

"She was afraid to, sir."

"What was she afraid of?"

"Jenny thinks you don't love her."

"Well, she is a foolish girl to think so; I love her as well as I do Emily or you."

"O, do you, papa? How glad she will be when I tell her! I don't believe she will care to go when she knows that. May I tell her now?"

"Tell her to come to me." Jenny soon appeared, and her father motioned her to a seat upon his knee. "What is this plan for a ride, my daughter? Do you want to go?"

Encouraged by his unusual tenderness, and her mother's approving smile, she unfolded all the proposed plan for the excursion, together with her wish to join her companions. The excitement lighted up her eyes, and made her appear very lovely, and when her father gave his ready consent, she caught his hand, pressed it again and again to her lips, and then ran to communicate the joyful tidings to her sister.

"I had no idea she was so much of an enthusiast," said her father, laughing, as he saw her dart from the room.

"She has a loving heart, and a grateful one," answered the mother. "I thank you for making her so happy."

"O Anna, you make me ashamed of my want of proper attention to my children's wants. One would think you were their own parent."

"When I consented to be your wife, it was with the intention certainly of being a mother to them. I could hardly love them better if they were my own."

“And your love is fully reciprocated,” replied Mr. Stephens, affectionately, placing his hand upon her brow.

This conversation was not soon forgotten by the father. If Jenny, in the overflowing of her heart, sometimes rendered her attentions in an abrupt manner, or at an inconvenient time, he tried to imitate the example of his gentle wife, and to receive them in the spirit in which they were offered.

Jenny and Ronald attended the same school, and on their return the little fellow had fallen into the habit of stopping on his way home instead of going directly there with his sister. Mrs. Stephens had several times expressed her wish that he should conquer this habit, as he often forgot how fast the hour flew by, and was late at his meals.

Ronald fully intended to obey his mother; but when Johnny Hawkes said, “Come in a minute, and see my little white kittens;” or, “My baby can walk alone; come and see her;” the temp-

tation proved too great; and this disobedience was so often repeated that at length his mother told him, if he was guilty of it again, she should be obliged in some way to punish him. For two days, he returned with Jenny, and immediately reported himself to his mother, who expressed her pleasure; but on the third day, a man with a hand organ was playing before a house near the school, and not all the motives his sister urged could persuade him to accompany her. He said, "The man will be done in a minute, and then I shall run so fast that I shall be home as soon as you are;" but he was mistaken. The organ player found unusual encouragement, and went slowly from one house to another, followed by a whole troop of approving listeners. It was not until warned by the approaching twilight that Ronald remembered he was disobeying his mother, and had rendered himself liable to be punished. He ran hastily home, but found his father had come early from the city, and after tea had taken his mother to ride.

On their return the lady asked for her son, and found that he had eaten his supper and retired to bed. She therefore concluded to say nothing to him until morning. In the course of the evening Mr. Stephens had occasion to go to his chamber, and heard his son crying softly in the room adjoining. He immediately went to him, and learned that the boy could not sleep from the dread of his mother's displeasure. "She told me I must not stay again, and I didn't mean to; I forgot how long it was, and I am very sorry."

The father saw his grief was sincere, and said, "Perhaps your mother will forgive you this time, if you promise never to do so again."

"O, no! she has forgiven me ever so many times; but she said if I ever did so again, she should punish me, and I know she will; she never tells lies."

Mr. Stephens left the chamber and went below, when he related the conversation to his wife, who immediately repaired to the bedside

of the penitent boy. She sat down by him, and soothed his distress by passing her hand caressingly across his brow. When his sobs ceased, she talked with him of the pain his disobedience had given her, and the sorrow she experienced; that by his neglect of her order to come directly home from school, she had been obliged to deprive him of the pleasure he had long anticipated of visiting a fine garden with her. "Until the last moment," she added, "I hoped you would come in time to accompany us; but at length we were obliged to go without you."

At these words, poor Ronald's grief burst forth afresh; but the thought, "I deserved to be disappointed," soon made him dry his tears, and promise in future to remember her commands.

Mrs. Stephens then kneeled by the side of the bed, and offered a short prayer for God's help to assist him to keep his good resolutions, and having affectionately kissed him, bade him good night, and left him to his slumbers.

In after years the love and respect of this

dear child was a rich return for all the labor she had bestowed upon his education; and as, under her constant watchfulness and untiring devotion, her daughters grew up to be modest, dutiful, and lovely in their Christian character, she found in her own experience the promise fulfilled, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it;" while both they and their brother thanked God for the hour when she became their step-mother.

The Sister's Influence.

THE SISTER'S INFLUENCE.

CHAPTER I.

THE INSANE MOTHER.

Account of Captain Wilson.—The sad Parting.—The dutiful Daughter.—Her Desire to be useful.—Her Sympathy for her Father.—Her Care of her Brothers and Sisters.

HOPELESS insanity! The words rang in his ears as a death knell to all his hopes of happiness. What a change from the years of domestic bliss, which looked brighter than ever in the retrospect, now that they were gone forever.

Captain Wilson leaned his weary head upon his hand, and for a few moments gave way to the most poignant grief. The wife of his bosom hopelessly insane, as had just been the announcement of a council of able physicians; about to be sent from her home to spend the few years

which might be assigned her in a public asylum, there to breathe out her soul to God, with not one relative or friend to perform the last sad offices of affection. This was surely affliction enough of itself to make one weary of life ; but when he remembered his children, deprived of the tenderness and care of one of the most devoted of mothers, the desolation of his own heart without her cheering smile and sympathy, he shrank from what was before him.

But Captain Wilson was a Christian, and though sorely oppressed, yet he was not wholly cast down. He had allowed himself to view the picture in its darkest shades. Now he tried to call to mind every thing which would fortify him to meet calmly and submissively the trial before him. He knew where to seek for strength, and after a short but severe struggle, he could say from the heart, " Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil ? " " Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

His meditations were at this moment interrupted by the voice of a little urchin upon whom three summers had smiled, who, putting his head in at the door, called out, "Come, pa, see doctor."

The father started quickly to his feet, wondering at his own forgetfulness. The physicians, after a minute and careful examination of the state of his wife, had, in compliance with his wishes, proceeded to the chamber of his daughter, who, it was feared, had received an injury in the spine. They were now in consultation, and his little son had come to request his attendance.

How true it is, in the dispensations of Providence, that one affliction seldom comes alone ! Certainly this was so in the case of Captain Wilson ; for here was his daughter, just budding into womanhood, condemned to her bed for many months, while, in answer to the eager, trembling inquiry of the father, "*Will she ever be well ?*" Dr. Spaulding, the family physician, answered, "I

will not deceive you. Hers is a very doubtful case."

At the age of twenty-one Captain Wilson married his cousin, Catharine Rand, who died just one year after, leaving a feeble infant to take the place in her father's affections rendered vacant by her mother's decease. The little Martha lived and grew, and when she was eight years old, welcomed with open arms another mother to their desolate home. Through the ten years which followed, Mrs. Wilson was indeed a mother to the young girl; and when, a few months before this time, her complaints assumed a nervous character, which, at the birth of her fifth child, terminated in hopeless insanity, not one of her own children mourned as did the almost heart-broken Martha.

She shrank from the sight of her father's grief, and for a brief period was entirely overwhelmed with the thought of the weight of care which would rest upon him, and, as she feared, would sink him into a premature grave.

“O, if I were only well and strong,” she cried out, almost in an agony of apprehension, “how much I could do to relieve him!”

“You are still able to render his situation far more comfortable, by your cheerful submission to the will of your heavenly Father,” was the suggestion of her inward monitor. Upon this principle Martha endeavored to act; and when next her father visited her couch, and with a sickly attempt at a smile asked whether she suffered much pain, her face brightened as she answered, with an affectionate caress, “No more than is good for me. I know who sends this affliction, and that he ‘doeth all things well.’ ”

The week following was one which would not soon be forgotten in that suburban dwelling. Captain Wilson conveyed his wife to the asylum, with scarce a hope that she would ever return; and when, at the last moment, while her children clung around, to beg her not to leave them, and the feeble wail from the infant stirred the

deepest fountains of the father's heart, the once-fond mother only looked on in stupid astonishment; even the experienced nurse owned to herself that the physicians were right—she was lost to her family forever.

That was indeed a dark day, both to the sorrow-stricken husband and the group of little nurslings he left at home. It was with the utmost difficulty he could command his feelings sufficiently to assume the calmness of exterior so necessary to manage an invalid. Mile after mile was passed, while only a monosyllable fell from his lips in answer to the indifferent remarks of the attendant, while Mrs. Wilson gazed stupidly from the windows of the carriage, or fell asleep upon the shoulder of her nurse. But who can tell the agony concentrated into the period occupied by their ride of twenty miles? How fresh in the mind of the weary man was the first introduction to his wife, then a lovely girl of twenty! Then came their betrothal and marriage, hastened by the necessity for his join-

ing his ship. How quickly she had won the heart of his little daughter! How rapidly sped away the few weeks which followed before he was to leave her! Then the happy seasons occurring once in a few months when he returned to his family. With what smiles and tears of joy was he welcomed! For one brief moment he forgets his grief, and a bright smile plays around his mouth; but it is instantly succeeded by a look of anguish such as would melt the hardest heart to witness. He sighs heavily as he remembers that those days are gone, never to return. The most tender words of affection, the most endearing caress, brings no response. A vacant, inanimate stare seems stereotyped upon that once bright, intelligent, loving countenance.

“O my God! place thine arm underneath me, support me in this hour of trial,” burst from his lips; “give me strength to submit to thy righteous will.”

But we must turn from this scene to the little ones whom he had left at home. For hours

after the carriage rolled slowly from the yard, the children clung together in the chamber of their sick sister, weeping as if there was not in the future one ray of hope to light their path. Feeble and nervous as the invalid was, for a time she yielded herself, without restraint, to her own sorrow, and her tears flowed with the rest. Occasionally the maiden sister of Captain Wilson, who had come to reside with them, opened the door, and said a few words in a cheerful voice ; but finding it only added to their grief, she thought it best to let nature have its free course, knowing that the buoyant spirits of youth would soon come to their relief.

The good old nurse, who had been in the family since Martha was a baby, having soothed her own little charge, — who only, of all the household, was quiet in the midst of the sorrow which surrounded her, and who, perhaps, was never to experience a mother's love or tenderness, — proceeded to the room which had been recently fitted up for the invalid. Here she

found that Sammy had crept to his sister's side, and, exhausted by his sorrow, had fallen asleep — his yellow curls lying on Martha's bosom. Sarah, Louise, and little Thomas sat holding each other by the hand, their eyes red and swollen with weeping, and their lips quivering, as their sister tried to induce them to go below for dinner.

Very quietly Betsey removed Sammy to his crib, bathed Martha's forehead and hands, smoothed the counterpane, and then, after a low whisper, left the room, and returned bearing the tiny form, which she proceeded to place in the arms open to receive it. Just at this moment the little one, moved by an infantile dream, smiled in the face of its protectress; and Betsey, seizing the opportunity, said, "There, Martha, she is yours. If your mother could speak, she would say so. You must be its mother. I know you will love the sweet little creature."

There was a holy look of affection upon the pale face, as, with a smile and a tear, the young

girl received the trust, and pressed the darling to her breast. What a revulsion in her feelings! A few minutes before she had prayed that God would take her from a world of sin and sorrow; but now her whole soul went out with the petition, "Spare me, Lord, for the sake of this motherless babe."

Seemingly satisfied with the result of her proceedings, Betsey turned, with a smile upon her lip, to the silent group who had been observant of every motion.

"Come, Sarah," she said, addressing the eldest, "you will feel better to eat some dinner, and take a run in the garden."

Sarah only answered by a sorrowful shake of the head.

Just at this minute a pleasant little "coo" from the baby caused a rush of all three of the children to the bed.

"See, Martha! O, do look, Thomas!" shouted Louise, for a moment forgetful of her grief; "the baby knows me; see her laugh;" and the

childish head nodded merrily, while pleasant words of endearment sounded out clear and musical through the room.

“This is the prettiest baby I ever saw,” said Thomas, firmly, while his large, thoughtful eyes, so like his mother’s, were fixed intently upon his little sister.

“So she is,” rejoined Sarah. “Louise, please let me play to her now; you’ve had your turn.”

With some reluctance Louise allowed her sister to take her place; and, for the fifteen minutes which succeeded, the little miss was won to repeat the story her listeners loved so well, and received very graciously the terms of fondness lavished upon her. In the midst of this scene the dinner bell rang, and a few words from Martha induced the older children to answer the summons. Betsey soon came with the tray, covered with a most tempting repast — taking the babe from the bed, and propping her charge with pillows. When the meal was finished, as it was very quickly, — for Martha’s appe-

tite was small and variable, — she said, “Betsey, I have been thinking that although I am confined to my bed, I can do something to help my poor father.”

“Indeed you can, Martha,” replied the good woman, speaking with the familiarity which her long residence in the family prompted. “You have great influence with the children, and if you would try to keep up and be cheerful for their sakes, and have a care for them, it would be the best thing to take your mind from yourself and be doing them a world of good.”

“I dread to see father,” suggested Martha, after a pause.

“Yes, he is to be pitied more than all the rest,” said the tender-hearted woman. “He knows nothing more of the care of children than this baby; and no wonder. He has all his life long been to sea until the last year. I can’t get his pale, haggard face out of my mind. It will be a dreadful change for him.”

“ I mean to try to be cheerful for his sake,” answered Martha, making an attempt to smile.

“ And you will succeed, I’m sure,” replied Betsey, in an encouraging tone, as she laid the babe, who was asleep, in the bed. “ I’m going to send the children out in the garden while you have a nap, and then I will talk about to-morrow.”

CHAPTER II.

RETURNING HOME.

The happy Thought. — Its Result. — Coöperation of the Little Ones. — Captain Wilson's Gratitude. — Martha's Success.

WHEN she was left alone, Martha tried in vain to sleep. The ensuing hour was passed in forming plans for the future, and in praying for grace and wisdom to train the little ones so early deprived of a mother's care, when the sound of steps was heard upon the stairs, and a tiny face peeped into the door: her mind was calm and firm for the duties before her.

“She's awake; I saw her eyes wide open,” shouted Sammy to the group waiting below; “I'll ask her to let us come up.” He opened the door, laughed a low, pleasant laugh in return for her smile, and warned by her uplifted finger that baby was still asleep, approached the bed

on tiptoe. "We've been out in the garden: may we come in here now?" he asked in a whisper; when, hardly waiting for a nod of assent, he went to the door to call his brothers and sisters.

They had been having a fine romp, as appeared from their rosy cheeks and quickened breath. The grief of the morning had for a time been forgotten; but it needed only a word to recall it.

Martha motioned them to draw their chairs to the side of her bed, when, in a most tender, loving manner, she reminded them of their loss, and of their father's sorrow, and asked them if they would promise to be kind to each other, and obedient to her wishes if she would try to be a mother to them.

Sarah and Louise gave a ready assent, too evidently without much thought, while Thomas sat looking at his sister, his eyes expressive of great interest. At length he said, "If you're going to be our mother, who'll be our Martha?"

At this they all laughed, and Martha drew him down for a kiss.

“ I shall be your sister just the same, and I shall try to do just as mother would wish, if she were here. Now, the first thing is to have the house cheerful, to receive papa. When we have arranged our plan, I will ask aunt Ann to help us to execute it. I want every thing to look as cheerful as possible; and as he will not be here until late, you may all sit up to tea; and you must not cry or look sober, but try to be obedient, good children, and that will make him forget some of his cares.”

Aunt Ann, coming in at this time, joined heartily in their plans, and soon four pairs of little hands were working with a right good will to make all ready for papa.

The apartment in which Mrs. Wilson had been confined was a large, pleasant room on the second floor, with a small one attached, which had been used as a play room for the children. As the affectionate daughter could readily understand, that, arranged as it was, every thing would tend to increase the sadness of her father by

reminding him of his loss, she had determined to appropriate this room to her own use, and by making it as cheerful as possible, induce him to remain in it more frequently. The children were therefore set to work to clear the play room to receive a bed, while an old-fashioned sofa, which was intended for an invalid, was brought from the attic for her use through the day.

Children are fond of a change, and while these arrangements were taking place, Sammy jumped and shouted with delight, and the older ones were not behind him in their expressions of joy. Pictures were hung in every place which afforded an opportunity, and to crown the whole, a fine portrait of their mother, as she was when she came a bride to the house, was suspended from the wall opposite the invalid's couch. It hung just where the rays of the setting sun fell upon it, warming the bright, happy countenance into life and beauty; and when Martha, placed in a large chair, supported by pillows, was drawn into her new apartment, a brilliant light reflected from

the pure brow, and it seemed to the young girl to meet her gaze with a smile of encouragement and approbation.

Captain Wilson had followed the sea from his boyhood ; had risen through the successive stages from a cabin boy to be the commander and part owner of a large merchant vessel, running from New York to Havre. His family lived in the vicinity of Newark, New Jersey, and, as we have intimated, consisted of his wife and six children. His sister, with Betsey the nurse, a cook, and a man servant, constituted the household.

It was early in September, and though the days were warm and the weather delightful, the evenings were cool and chilly. As Captain Wilson drew near his home, the weight upon his spirits only seemed to increase. He actually shrank from the weeping, sorrowing group he expected to encounter. The coachman drove the weary horses slowly into the yard, and the father, overcome by his emotions, pressed his handkerchief to his eyes, while his form shook with

emotion. In imagination he even now heard his little ones calling aloud for their mother, their grief renewed at the sight of him. Hardly raising his eyes, he stepped from the carriage and slowly ascended the steps; but scarcely had he reached the door, when a little curly head was thrust out into the night air, and a merry voice shouted back in glee, "He's come! I's so glad! Yes, he has, he has come!" was echoed joyfully through the hall; and before he could collect his thoughts, the agitated father was conducted up the wide staircase, where the door of the room he had so dreaded to enter was thrown wide open, and the happy group who accompanied him ushered him in, and led him across the apartment to the couch where lay his sick daughter, waiting with open arms to receive him and welcome his return.

As Captain Wilson gazed in his daughter's expressive face, and met her tearful, earnest eyes, so full of anxious affection, he realized all her care for him, and her desire to do every

thing in her power to lighten his heavy load of sorrow. In that one moment their hearts were knit together, as under other circumstances they could not have been for years; and through all the months of trial which followed, the season was recalled by both with softened recollections.

“God bless you, my child!” he exclaimed, in a husky voice, “and may he long continue you to be a comfort and a blessing to your father.”

He then turned, and approaching the cheerful fire which blazed upon the hearth, said, “This is indeed comfortable; the air without is very chilly.” Directly over the mantel-piece hung the portrait before mentioned; and the bright blaze, flashing up and flitting across the features, gave the countenance a most life-like appearance. He started forward, while poor Martha’s heart fluttered like a caged bird, when Sammy clung to his father, saying, “See, papa, that’s my pretty mamma; sister Martha says I may kiss her every day I’m good. Please hold me up to kiss her now.”

Captain Wilson, without a word, complied with the child's wish. He could not command his voice to speak, and the embarrassing silence was relieved by the entrance of the nurse with the tray for tea.

"Papa, papa, why can't we have supper up here every night," called out Louise, in an ecstasy of delight, as Betsey proceeded to roll into the centre of the room a large table, and to lay the cloth.

"I thought," suggested Martha, in an apologizing manner, "that you would be cold — and — that — that it would be pleasant for all to be together this evening."

"Thank you, my child," responded the captain, approaching the couch. "My feelings have been consulted in every particular. My home seems like a paradise." And so, indeed, it *did*, in comparison with the scenes his imagination had painted. "What fairies have been here to-day?" he asked, addressing his younger daughters, whose eyes followed his every movement.

"I could hardly have believed such a change possible."

"We have made a nice room in here, too," replied Sarah, opening the door into Martha's bedroom.

"That is really delightful. Then we are to have Martha with us every day." Captain Wilson spoke warmly and more cheerfully than he had done since the announcement of his wife's hopeless state. His only anxiety was removed, and that was the fear lest the movement from so distant a room as the one Martha had occupied might prove of injury to her — certainly, if the effort were often repeated.

"I moved all the books," "And I moved the playthings," was the eager cry of Sarah and Louise. "I helped you move the blocks," was the quiet rejoinder of the more exact Thomas.

"And what did Sammy do?" asked the really delighted father, taking the golden-haired boy upon his lap.

"I combed Betsey's hair to make it look pretty for papa," said the boy, in an exulting tone.

At this reply, papa really laughed, and told the boy that he must certainly make a barber, he had succeeded so well.

“But Betsey said I pulled like an old Trojan,” continued the child, much excited at the merriment he had caused.

The laugh was now turned upon the good woman, who was glad to escape from the room; and in a moment aunt Ann entered, and was followed by the cook with the tea. It was an unusual event for the younger children to be up at so late an hour, and they evidently intended to make the most of it.

Captain Wilson poured a cup of tea for his daughter, buttered her muffins, and placed them upon the small teapoy at her side. As he had scarcely tasted food through the day, he evidently enjoyed the repast upon which the cook had expended no little skill; and when at its close they drew around the family altar, though his voice trembled as he prayed for the absent member of the household, yet his heart swelled with thank-

fulness as he remembered the blessings still left him.

When the children had bidden their father good night, and the sound of their voices in the hall had ceased, Captain Wilson seated himself by his daughter, and enjoyed with her a quiet season, such as soothed and comforted both their hearts. He felt that he had never known her worth ; that it needed just this affliction to develop those latent traits which she herself hardly knew she possessed. She evidently had a tact in governing the children without seeming to exercise authority, which would be of inestimable value under the present circumstances. Then she had exhibited a forethought and judgment in her plans which greatly pleased her father.

“ You are wonderfully like your own mother,” he said, gazing lovingly into her face. “ Both in person and character you resemble her more than I was aware.”

Martha smiled, as she replied, “ I should like to name the baby for my mother. Betsey says

she is to be my particular charge, and if there is no objection" — she hesitated, for her father's countenance had assumed the look of distress which it always wore when the motherless infant was mentioned.

Making an effort, however, he quickly regained his composure, and said, "Katy, then, it shall be. It is a pleasant thought, and we shall love her all the more for her name. You know, my dear, I have heretofore been scarcely able to endure the sight of the poor little thing, when I remembered — well, I must try to imitate your example, and perform the present duties, leaving it for the softening hand of time to allay the poignancy of our sorrow ; but of little Katy I shall love to think as the object of your tender care. But, my child, I fear all this will be too much for your strength. Can you endure so much bustle and confusion as the presence of the children will bring to your room?"

"God will give me strength," was the murmured response. "Yes," she added, after a mo-

ment's pause, and gazing into her father's face with eyes moistened by her emotion, "he has given me a mission, and I feel sure he will grant me the necessary wisdom and strength to execute it. You can hardly imagine the delight it is to me to feel that I am not to be wholly laid aside from usefulness. I think I can bear pain with more courage when I am assured of that."

"You have already accomplished much, my child," was the almost inarticulate reply. "When I see you, notwithstanding your pain, doing so much to alleviate my suffering, and for the good of your brothers and sisters, it causes me the keenest mortification. I see that I have not yielded a cheerful submission to the will of my heavenly Father. I had a feeling, though unacknowledged to myself, that my trial was so great that it relieved me from all other duties and responsibilities; and I am now forgetting in my own pleasure that you have been through far more excitement than is good for you. You are very pale. I shall send Betsey to you at once. If I

had been told, as I approached the house, that I should have passed the evening in the enjoyment of so much real comfort, I could not have believed it possible. Good night, love ; I know you will not forget the absent one in your prayers."

CHAPTER III.

THE NEW SCHOOL.

Martha's Experiment in Teaching.—Its sad Effect upon her Health.—The new Expedient.—Its Success.—Captain Wilson again at Sea.—The joyful Reunion.

FOR several days, the children were mindful of their promise to their sister. Sarah and Louise were willing to occupy themselves in their studies, and under her supervision hear each other's recitations. Thomas was always thoughtful of her wishes, and ready to obey her commands; but the poor girl was afflicted with an almost constant pain in her head, and she soon became aware that if she would continue to exercise the watchfulness of a mother over her young charge, she must adopt some plan whereby she could be wholly free from the care of their studies. She knew her mother had a dis-

like to sending them so far as it would be necessary to enable them to reap benefit from the best schools in the neighboring city, and there was no private school near at hand, though there were a sufficient number of children to maintain one. At length, after losing her sleep one entire night, and having a day of serious sickness in consequence, a happy thought occurred to her, which, if accomplished, would relieve her of all her difficulty. She was sure of her father's coöperation in any plan she might propose, and only waited for a suitable opportunity to inform him of it before she took measures to put it in execution.

Belonging to her father's estate, and but a few rods distant from the house, was a neat cottage, formerly occupied by a maiden sister of the owner. This was vacant, and one of the rooms might be fitted up, at a trifling expense, as a school room. Among the friends of the family was a widow lady in destitute circumstances, who, with one daughter, had been for

some time seeking employment. Her mother had been in the habit of giving them assistance, and she knew would approve of their influence upon the children. The daughter was well educated, and could have obtained an eligible situation as teacher, but for her unwillingness to leave her mother. Martha had no doubt a sufficient number of pupils might be obtained from the neighboring families to afford them a comfortable support.

Captain Wilson was so much delighted with the proposition, that he immediately ordered the carriage and rode to the city to see them, and returned in an hour in company with Miss Palmer, the lady in question. She said her mother gratefully accepted their offer. She was ready to commence making her arrangements at once, and indeed proposed going that very day to the cottage, and calling upon such ladies as they might name in regard to pupils.

Captain Wilson smiled his approbation of her promptness, and told her she had one requisite

for a commander of a vessel; while Martha made out a list of scholars, such as she thought would be glad to attend school.

So energetic was Miss Palmer, that before the close of the week she and her mother were settled in their new home, ready for their school of twenty pupils to commence on Monday morning.

By this arrangement, Martha was enabled to have several hours every day of absolute quiet, and soon found the beneficial result upon her system. She was now able to enjoy the nightly gathering in her room, and it shortly became quite a matter of course that tea should be carried up there. Little Katy grew every day more fond of her loving sister, and her presence enlivened many weary hours.

Soon, however, this dutiful daughter became aware that her father was failing in strength and spirits. He often sat gazing absently into the fire, and was obliged to make an effort to arouse himself when addressed by his children.

Little Sammy, his pet and plaything, used to climb into his lap, and touched by his look of sadness, whisper, "I is sorry papa feel bad. Martha say I is good, 'cause I don't cry now; and God will let me see my pretty mamma some time up in the sky."

Captain Wilson, on such occasions, could only press the child closer to his heart. He had given up the command of the ship in which he had sailed for years, with the intention of remaining at home; but now he felt the need of the stimulus of active life, and a hankering for the sea. Had Martha been in health, he would not have hesitated a moment; but he could not think of adding to her care. He had determined to seek some other employment, when a most favorable offer was made him to go to India. He felt a strong desire to accept it, but the thought of his family withheld him. His sister, though capable of providing for their bodily wants, was not such an one as he should choose to be with his children in case Martha's health

should fail. She was altogether too indulgent, especially with the little boys, who were her favorites. His answer must be given in a few days. What should he do?

"Father," said Martha, one night after the children had retired, and when they had sat silent for the space of half an hour.

He started quickly, and, approaching her, looked inquiringly in her face.

The young girl's voice trembled, as she asked, "Now that we are all so comfortably settled, why don't you go to sea for a time? I think a voyage would do you good."

As the result of this conversation, Captain Wilson wrote an acceptance of his appointment before he retired to rest, and in a fortnight, after having paid a farewell visit to his wife, without being recognized by her, and made every possible arrangement for the comfort of his family, sailed for Calcutta, expecting to be absent thirteen months.

With the family at home, the winter passed

very quietly away. Sarah, Louise, and Thomas gained the approbation of their teacher by their studiousness and careful attention to the rules of the school; while at home the precept, and more particularly the example, of their elder sister was producing its legitimate fruits. Far less often than formerly did the little girls dispute about trifles, or show a disposition to take advantage of Thomas, or tyrannize over him in their plays.

On one occasion, particularly, Martha listened with a swelling heart to a conversation carried on in her room, and felt that she ought never to yield to discouragement while her instructions had so evidently taken root and were bearing such pleasant fruit. It was the afternoon of Wednesday, the week succeeding New Year, Sarah and Louise were intent upon a new puzzle which had been one of their presents. It proved indeed a puzzle to them. Louise first discovered the mode of putting it together, and in rather a triumphant

manner began to explain the method to her sister.

“Do keep still,” began Sarah, sharply; “I want to find it out myself;” but instantly checking herself, she added, softly, “I did not mean to speak so; will you please to excuse it?”

“Yes, indeed,” replied Louise; “I ought not to have told you at all. I know you can do it if you take it in your own hands. There, that is right!” and in her joy she leaned forward and kissed her sister’s cheek.

“How happy it makes us to try to do right!” said Sarah. “Martha says if I try I shall overcome my quick temper; and I am trying with all my might. It makes me love every body when I can think quick enough to conquer myself.”

“Martha told me,” responded Louise, “that it is a great deal more credit to you to govern your temper than it is to me to govern mine, for you are naturally quick to feel any thing.

But she says she sees it is more difficult for me to forgive than for you. How hard she tries to have us do right!" Just at this moment Thomas came from the bedroom drawing baby Katy in a light wagon. The child was worrying, and the little boy was weary with trying to amuse her. "Won't you please to take baby a while?" he asked, approaching his sisters.

"No, we can't; don't you see we are busy? and she's cross. Carry her to nurse," answered Sarah.

"Nurse has gone away, and aunt Ann is ironing. She wants us to amuse her a little while, and my arms ache so."

Martha started up on her couch with the intention of calling the boy to her side, when Louise said, "Let's take her — we can play afterward;" and for a few minutes the room resounded with the merry shouts of the little girls, and the responsive laugh from the baby, while Thomas was rendered perfectly happy by the voluntary offer of Sarah to allow him to take

the new top, while Sammy left his pile of blocks to see it spin.

It is now again midwinter. Captain Wilson has arrived at New York; the vessel has been spoken in the harbor, and he is hourly expected home. Let us once more enter the large parlor, where the family have assembled to welcome him. Martha, pale, yes, paler than ever, but with a bright light of happiness beaming from her eye, lies in her wonted place upon the couch, while Thomas and Sammy are standing near, receiving instruction in the mysteries of cat's-cradle. There is a world of patience on the part of the teacher, and some perseverance in the pupils; but still the cord will not assume the proper shape on Sammy's hands. "I guess it slips off too often," he says, looking archly in his brother's face, and bursting into a merry laugh. Sarah and Louise sit by the window, each holding a book; but far oftener their eyes are fixed upon the road than upon the page.

Nearly opposite them sits aunt Ann, with her knitting, for she thinks the time will pass more quickly if she is at work.

But who is that frail lady seated in the large stuffed chair? Is she a stranger, to intrude upon the group at such a sacred hour of reunion? A flush mantles her pale cheek as she hears a carriage approaching, and she almost loses her hold upon the fairy form she has been coaxing to remain in her arms. But the carriage passes on, and leaves her paler than before. Hark! what is she saying? "Katy, sweet little Katy, will she not stay with mamma?"

Can it be, then, that the light of intelligence again beams from those eyes? that reason again sits upon her throne? Yes, it is indeed so. By a severe fever Mrs. Wilson was brought to the verge of the grave, and for days lay hovering between time and eternity. Betsey was summoned to the asylum, where she watched her mistress with the most untiring care, and had the unalloyed happiness, when the patient was

pronounced out of danger, to see that she was recognized. She remained with Mrs. Wilson until the physician of the asylum pronounced it safe for her to return to her family.

Katy, however, cannot be contented to remain so quiet. She sees the kitten under the sofa, and jumps down to catch it. Pussy is reluctant to be caught, and tries to elude the grasp, which only secures the tail. Presently a scream from baby proclaims that she has revenged herself upon her pursuer. Sarah and Louise run from the window to Katy's rescue, and are loud in their abuse of pussy, and their condolence with the little miss. In the midst of all this noise a carriage stops unnoticed at the gate. A manly form approaches the house, and a firm, well-known step is heard ascending the stairs.

"Papa! papa!" is shouted by all the younger children, while Martha, in her excitement, sits upright, and the lady in the chair presses her hands upon her heart. Sammy is already in his father's arms, and Thomas clinging to him, while

the little girls each strive for a hand to lead him into the room. He enters the door, takes a step toward Martha's couch, then stops, his eyes riveted upon the lady in the chair, while a death-like pallor overspreads his bronzed cheek. He thinks it an illusion of the imagination, but one he cannot shake off. She opens her arms, and her white lips move; when, with a joyful cry, he starts forward, and clasps her in his strong embrace, exclaiming, "My God, I thank thee! it is my own, my precious wife!"

And here we must leave them, having already extended our story beyond its original limits. Mrs. Wilson recovered her health, and, as Martha slowly declined, was able to render her last days happy by her tender solicitude, while the children never forgot that they owed much of their comfort and usefulness in after life to their sister's influence.

Faithful Hannah.



FAITHFUL HANNAH.

CHAPTER I.

THE MORNING CALL.

Mrs. Evans and Mrs. Stimpson.—Different Views about Servants.—Dismissal of Hannah.—Delight of Ella and Augustus at her Return.—The broken Mirror.—The penitent Servant.—Her faithful Service.

MRS. EVANS, a lady of wealth and refinement, was one morning at the usual hour for receiving visitors, summoned to her parlor to meet Mrs. Stimpson. After a few moments' conversation upon indifferent topics, the caller introduced a subject of great interest to mistresses of families, namely, the difficulty of procuring good and faithful servants.

“How is it, Mrs. Evans,” she asked, “that you so seldom find it necessary to change your

domestics? Why, I never can keep one more than a month, and very often I have two in a week."

"I have hitherto been very fortunate in obtaining good servants," replied Mrs. Evans with a smile.

"You may, indeed, consider yourself so, if that has been the case. For my part, during the seven years that I have been married, this has been my great trial. I have endeavored, again and again, to persuade George to give up housekeeping, and to board at a hotel; but on this point he is as stubborn as a mule. He says he has been boarding all his life, and he wants a home; and then he greatly magnifies the dangers to which the children would be exposed in such a place."

"I think," said Mrs. Evans, pleasantly, "your husband and I should agree, that certainly a public house would be a poor exchange for the comforts of home, particularly for the dear children. Think of your little Ella or Augustus

being confined to one small room from morning till night, with their meals brought to them, or going to the common table with the servants."

"Well, I acknowledge, there would be some things unpleasant about it; but, after all, what a relief for me! Three times a day I must be bored with giving directions to the cook about meals. Then the housemaid is impudent and cross, and never seems to understand her work without being told again and again. But the nursery girl is worse than all; for she knows her consequence, since it is hard to get the children to stay with a stranger. I declare, I have to put up with every thing from her. Why, — would you believe it? — a fortnight ago, she tried me so that I gave her notice to quit, and she took it in high dudgeon, and was off at once! I had a new one sent from the office in the afternoon; but neither Ella nor Augustus would look at her. They wanted Hannah back. If I live to be as old as Methuselah, I never shall forget that night, for they screamed and

cried ; so I sat with them myself until midnight, and then George came and took them both into bed with him. I was glad enough to lie down quietly in the nursery. The next morning he asked me what I sent Hannah away for, and insisted upon knowing the particulars. ‘Was she not kind to the children?’ he asked ; and I could not but acknowledge that she was very fond of them. ‘Then,’ said he, ‘I shall go and bring her back.’ It was a hard thing for me to bring down my pride to allow it ; but he was decided, and when he is, it is of no use to say a word.”

“And did she come?”

“La, yes ; she was glad enough of the chance. Why, she has nothing in the world to do but to see to those children, and make their clothes, except some family sewing now and then. But George didn’t understand managing her as well as I do, and he offered her fifty cents more a week if she would come at once. I was very angry at first, as it was natural I should be ;

but he said the sight of her joy, when the little creatures sprang into her arms and kissed her face and hands, more than paid him for all the extra expense. But, then, how little men understand the trials of housekeeping.”

Poor Mr. Stimpson! He thought he knew them in their length and breadth; and yet, for the sake of his children, he would not consent to his wife's plan of living in a hotel. A boarding house, if it were ever so good, she would not even think of.

While her visitor had been speaking, Mrs. Evans tried in vain to devise some method of answering her friend, which would, without offence, give her an idea of the cause of her unusual trouble. She happened to know a little of her neighbor's management, or mismanagement; having at that very time a girl who had remained in the family as cook for more than four years, after having been dismissed for some trifling fault from the family of Mr. Stimpson; and the very night previous to this conversation,

a cousin of the same girl had taken refuge with her relative, having been sent in disgrace from the house for breaking a china vase while dusting the parlors. When, therefore, the lady stopped to take breath, having talked herself into the belief that she was a most aggrieved and injured woman, and that her husband joined with the servants against her, Mrs. Evans asked, "And whom have you with you beside her?"

"O, dear!" she replied, as if she were on the point of weeping; "that's just my business out this morning. I was obliged, yesterday, to dismiss my housemaid, and I am on my way to the office. But I am entirely discouraged; and the cook declares it's more than she is willing to do, to show a new girl about her work every week. I should like to know who she expected would do it?"

"If I shall not be considered impertinent, I should like to ask what offence the chambermaid was guilty of."

“O, she was abominably careless,” said Mrs. Stimpson, slightly blushing, “and was always breaking some valuable article.”

“How long had she been with you?”

“Nearly three weeks. I thought at first I had found a real treasure, for she was neat and obliging, and got along very well with the other girls; but there is always something happening to disappoint me. I could bear it all, however,” she added, suppressing a sob, “if George wouldn’t scold so. He undertook to say this morning, when I complained to him, that judging from my own account, I was the one to blame. Well, I did acknowledge that I wished I had not been so hasty; but I should like to know how I’m to help it. It’s so provoking to see one’s crockery smashed to pieces!”

“I think,” said Mrs. Evans, seriously, “where a servant is habitually careless, it is a grave fault, and involves much needless expenditure; but I have generally found that the girls themselves regretted an accident more keenly than I

allowed myself to do. I think of one case at this moment, where a young girl, who had been with me but three days, broke a large mirror, shivering it to atoms with her broom; and this mirror had been presented to me but a short time before by my husband, in consequence of recovering an old debt; and it could not be replaced."

"And what did you do?" asked Mrs. Stimpson, breathless with interest; "I hope you made the worthless creature smart for it."

"At first I felt very much excited. I heard the noise, and was sure it was my beautiful mirror; so I concluded the safest way would be for me to keep my room until I was calm. In about ten minutes, I started to go down, but on opening the door found the poor girl in the entry weeping bitterly, and trying to gain courage to tell me what she had done. As soon as she saw me, her grief entirely overcame her, and she sobbed aloud. I led her to a chair, and sat down by her; but this only made her weep

more freely. ‘O mistress, I’ve broken—I’ve broken—O, dear! what shall I do?—I’ve broken your great glass hanging in the best parlor!’”

“Well, she deserved to be put in the house of correction.”

Mrs. Evans smiled, and proceeded. “‘How did it happen?’ I asked, speaking as calmly as possible, though I own my nerves were somewhat unstrung.

“She took her apron from her face to gaze at me, and then burst out afresh, ‘O ma’am, you don’t understand.’

“‘Yes,’ I said, ‘I heard the crash. But how came you near it?’

“The poor girl started from her seat, and threw herself on her knees before me. ‘O ma’am,’ she exclaimed, as well as her violent sobbing would allow, ‘if you’ll only whip me, or have something done to me, I’ll thank you for it to the last day of my life; but if you speak so kindly it will kill me outright. O,

dear, dear! what will become of me? And an own child couldn't be easier spoken to, supposing she had done it. Indeed, ma'am, my heart's broken entirely with the great trouble!'"

In the midst of her indignation, the listener could not keep back a tear which glistened in her eye, but she immediately said, "I declare, I'm provoked with myself for pitying the girl. After all, I suppose George would have told her it was no matter, accidents will happen, or some such nonsense. 'Twould be just like him."

"That was what I did. I raised her from the floor, and tried to soothe her agitated feelings. I did not then understand all that was involved in what she considered her disgrace; but I saw enough to convince me that she repented most truly of her carelessness, and I tried not to think of my loss. But it was a long time before I succeeded in quieting her, and getting any account of the sad accident. It appeared that she was told to dust the parlors, and being very thorough, thought they must be swept first,

and commenced a vigorous cleaning, such as I never allow unless I am present to attend to its proper execution. Happening to go too near the mirror, and being very much in earnest in her sweeping, she gave it such a violent blow with the end of her broom that it was shivered into a thousand pieces. I noticed that she made no attempt to excuse herself. She told the whole truth, blaming herself severely. She was so much overcome at the sight of the glass, that I sent her away, and called the cook to help me to pick up the pieces from the carpet before my husband's return."

"And what did he say?"

"That was seven years ago, and he used at that time to think I was too indulgent to my servants; but I represented to him so vividly her keen regret, that he promised as a favor to me not to blame the poor girl."

"Then you did send her off?"

"O, no! she has been an invaluable servant to me. She is in the nursery now. I would

not willingly part with her for a dozen mirrors, though my husband gave two hundred dollars for the one she broke. But money could not estimate her worth to me and my children. I soon found her so faithful and good-tempered that I transferred her to the nursery, and I really believe her watchfulness and incessant, untiring devotion to the twins, when we were visited with that awful scourge, the scarlet fever, saved their lives. You know I didn't see them for many weeks, being very ill myself. My husband has often thanked me for the course I pursued."

While listening to her friend, the countenance of Mrs. Stimpson had undergone a great change; and when Mrs. Evans concluded, she said, earnestly, "I more than half believe you are right; but, O, dear! I never could command my temper so. It isn't in my nature. Why, I couldn't help striking the girl in the face yesterday, when she broke the vase."

CHAPTER II.

THE TWO HOMES.

Mr. Stimpson's Dissatisfaction. — Sickness of Ella and Augustus. — Journey of their Mother. — Care of their Father for them. — His sad Reflections.

It was nine years since Mr. Evans brought Helen Manning, a bride of a few hours, to his pleasant home. Lovely and lovable he thought her, but he certainly did not then realize what a treasure she would prove to him and his. She had received a thorough domestic education, and well understood what ought to be required of those she employed as domestics. She was very systematic in the arrangement of her work, having regular days for washing, ironing, cleaning, and the like. If she were about to engage new servants, after inquiring particularly their character for honesty and neatness, she explained fully to them what she should expect of them, and what

she should do for them in return. She never had found occasion to go to the intelligence offices, as a service in her family was eagerly sought for, and when the marriage of either of her servants or any unforeseen circumstance caused them to leave, there were many anxious to obtain the vacant place. The great secret of her success was merely the fact that she acted upon the inspired precept, "Whatsoever ye would that men would do to you, do ye even so to them." She interested herself in their welfare. She advised them how to spend their money to the best advantage, and also where to invest what they did not need for present use. When they were sick she took care of them; but more than all this, she bore patiently with their failings, kindly pointed out their errors, always taking the opportunity to do so when they were alone. She believed that praise was quite as necessary as censure, and often her cheerful commendation gave fresh courage to those ready to despond.

Mrs. Evans and her visitor lived within a few

squares of each other. In many respects they were similarly situated : their husbands were each engaged in prosperous business, and were known as gentlemen of strict honor and integrity in all their business transactions, and were ready to do all in their power to promote the welfare of their individual families. Each of them was blessed with two children. But here the similarity ended. Indeed, there could hardly be a greater contrast in the management of two households. Mrs. Stimpson lived for herself and for a world of fashion ; Mrs. Evans for her family and the service of her Maker.

It was nearly a year before her husband awoke to the fact that his wife was more than ordinarily competent in the management of those under her care ; and then his attention was called to the subject by a remark of his young friend George Stimpson, who entered his counting room one morning after having been married four months, and threw himself into a chair with an expression of utter despondence upon his handsome

features. "There!" he exclaimed, "I am entirely disappointed in my expectations of happiness in marrying and settling down, as people call it."

"You astonish me, Stimpson; you, who carried the palm, and won your wife from scores of competitors for her hand; you, who have scarcely passed the honey moon! What can you mean?"

"Well, perhaps I spoke too strongly," was the reply, as he colored slightly at his friend's earnest surprise; "but now, upon your honor, did you never regret that you were a benedict?"

"Not for an instant," said Mr. Evans, with enthusiasm.

"Nor the troubles incident to housekeeping?"

"I have had no troubles."

"Then all I have to say is, your lot has been different from mine. Why, in the one matter of changing servants, we have experienced more difficulties in the four months we have kept house, than I ever did in all my mercantile business during as many years."

“Why then do you change so often? We have never made a change in eleven months.”

“What! no change? Why, our servants seldom remain more than a week or two, and my wife assures me that every one is subject to the same trials, — that her mother always experienced them.”

“I think,” replied Mr. Evans, seriously, “that there must be some want of proper management; but I confess I never have thought upon the subject. Nothing has heretofore occurred to bring it before me. But come home with me to dinner; I will talk with Helen about it.”

“I don’t know but I ought to be ashamed to say it,” replied his friend, “but this is the second morning that I have gone without my breakfast. I have just engaged the third cook within a week, and I fear she will be as worthless as the others. I asked her particularly if she could make a cup of coffee, and she was loud in her own praise; but they all are ready enough to boast what they can do.”

After a free conversation with the wife of his friend, Mr. Stimpson began to understand that the fault was not entirely on the part of the servants; and after years proved to him that a gay belle, though she possessed every personal charm, did not always render home most attractive. It was not, however, until after the birth of his children that he fully realized the sad effect of the want of proper interest and knowledge in her training of them, and in the management of her household. If they were fashionably dressed, and their hair elaborately curled when she occasionally sent for them into the parlor, to exhibit them to the visitors, so that she could hear their beauty praised, it seemed to be all she thought about them. She gave them up entirely to the care of the nurse; and this was not the worst thing for them, for the warm-hearted daughter of Ireland, feeling their entire dependence upon her for comfort and happiness, often exhibited more real affection for her charge than the mother who gave them birth.

Then, Mrs. Stimpson was a woman of quick temper. For the most trivial offence she would dismiss servants, however faithful they had proved, until no one could be found willing to be in her employ except those who had just left their native country. Thus it was often the case that for a week together there was not a single meal properly prepared, and Mr. Stimpson was often obliged to leave the house with the unsightly dishes, which were set in a slovenly and disorderly manner upon the table, untasted by him.

But he had a father's heart; and vexatious and annoying almost beyond endurance as he sometimes felt his domestic trials to be, he bore them all, hoping, as his children grew older, that his wife might become more alive to their interest, and devote herself to her family. Perhaps his affection for his beautiful little ones was rendered more tender from the fact that he felt there was no one to look after them but himself. He had spent hours in the nursery while his wife was at parties, balls, or concerts. When

they were sick, he had again and again come home from his counting room, wearied and perplexed by unusual cares, to spend the evening and night by their couch, while she whose appropriate business it was to soothe their pain was at the theatre, or perhaps whirling in the dizzy waltz. When she returned home at midnight, and found her husband bathing the temples of the sufferer, or singing a lullaby to quiet them to sleep, she only reproached him for doing that which the nurse was paid to do.

A few weeks before the commencement of this story, Ella and Augustus had passed through one of the sicknesses to which children are subject, namely, the measles. Their father and mother were on the point of starting on a short journey, and she was very much vexed that their sickness should have occurred so inopportunist. She, however, tried to persuade her husband to leave them with the physician and the nurse, who was no other than the Hannah mentioned at the commencement of my story.

But this he peremptorily refused to do. If, in spite of the illness of her children, she still wished to take the excursion, she could do so in company with her friends, but he should remain at home. And she went, leaving her husband to sigh over the wreck of his conjugal happiness.

Judge not too harshly of Mrs. Stimpson. She was only acting out the lessons she had learned at home. She was a virtuous woman, who would have shuddered at the thought of any want of conjugal fidelity. Her husband, with all his strict ideas of duty to children, she loved next to herself.

But she, as well as her mother, was a woman of fashion. It was to this god she paid her homage. She was still beautiful, lively, and witty in society, and her company was much sought after. Could she be expected to give up all its attractions and seclude herself in a nursery? O, no! When she returned from some gay assembly, and found her husband read-

ing in the parlor, (she had long ago given up the idea of inducing him to accompany her in her ceaseless round of pleasure,) she would repeat to him the words of flattery which had been poured in her ear; and even as he gazed at her sparkling countenance, her cheeks brilliant with excitement, he wondered how he could ever have thought her beautiful.

CHAPTER III.

THE CLOSING SCENE.

Hannah's devoted Service.—Trouble with her Mistress. — Her Dismissal and Recall. — Sickness of Mrs. Stimpson. — Distress of her Husband. — His Discovery of Hannah's great Worth. — Distressing Death of Mrs. Stimpson. — The Nurse made Housekeeper. — Marriage of Ella.

BUT to return to the children. The physician pronounced the disease to be light, and said that with care they would soon be well. How that word *care* grated on the father's ear! He had run home from his counting room to meet the doctor at the hour when he was expected to call. Hannah had been in the house but a short time, and though pleased with her appearance, yet he knew nothing of her capabilities as a nurse. For a few days, therefore, he left his business to his head clerk, merely going for an hour in the morning to give directions for the day, and then

returning to his sick children. It was probable they had been exposed to the measles at the same time, for they were taken within a day or two of each other, and though not very sick, yet they needed constant attention. The kind father held their hot hands as he sat in the darkened room, told Ella stories to wile away the time, imitated the cries of all sorts of birds and beasts to little Augustus, and when they slept he laid his head on the pillow by their side. During this time he watched Hannah as she administered to her charge, and was delighted to find her faithful in obeying the directions of the physician, and extremely fond of the children. He determined, if she continued to do so well, to spare no expense to retain her with them. When his wife returned, charmed with her journey, and found Ella and Augustus nearly recovered, she exclaimed, "O George, it was such a shame you were not with us! and Mrs. Larned said so too. She says you are the most fascinating man she ever knew, only you are so very grave; but she

rather likes you the better for that. You see, now, you could have gone as well as not, for the children have got along finely — I dare say just as fast as if I had been at home.” Mr. Stimpson made no reply, except by a sad smile, as he thought of the anxious hours he had passed with them. He had long ago learned that many words produced no effect except to call up strife.

A week after her return, Hannah asked leave to go out for one afternoon, having been unwearied in her attention to the children, never having left them day or night for weeks. Mrs. Stimpson refused, as the housemaid was busy, and could not be spared to take her place. Hannah felt the need of the relaxation, and was very earnest to go. She therefore said, “They are very quiet in their play: couldn’t you be with them in the nursery?” Her mistress arose in anger from her chair, and calling her a vile name, asked her what she meant by such impudence.

Hannah retorted, “Your husband does not feel

himself above taking care of them, and I think it would look better for you to feel more interest in your own children." As soon as her passion would allow her to speak, Mrs. Stimpson dismissed her from the house, at the same time loading her with abuse. This was what she had related to her friend Mrs. Evans, as the abominable impudence of the nurse maid. Mr. Stimpson, thinking it would be a good lesson for her, permitted her to remain with them a part of the night, instead of going to them at once, as he felt inclined. But after lying awake hour after hour, he at length left his wife asleep in the nursery, taking his babes to share his own bed.

After he had succeeded in bringing Hannah back, he told his wife that he had forbidden her to leave his service unless ordered to do so by him, and that he had promised to do well by her if she continued to be kind to the children. He talked with her faithfully about her own course, begging her, as she loved him and valued her own peace of mind, to give up her vain pursuit

after pleasure, and devote her time to the happiness of her family, and to the higher objects of life. He even with tears drew a picture of the comfort they might enjoy in each other's society, if she would begin life anew. Mrs. Stimpson was considerably affected by this conversation, especially as her husband, in his earnestness, had shown her more than usual affection; but she was too proud to acknowledge her error. She snatched away her hand from his grasp, and said, bitterly, "If you choose to give up all pleasure, and live such a humdrum life, you are welcome to do it; but I shall do no such thing." The poor husband bit his lip to refrain from an angry retort, and then said, impressively, "Whatever course you pursue, in one thing I am determined to be obeyed; Hannah shall remain with the children." There was a look of decision in his eye, as he said this, which she never had witnessed there; and at that moment she loved her husband more truly than ever before. Yet it was with regard to

this conversation she complained to Mrs. Evans of her husband's scolding.

The day had hardly dawned; only the first faint streaks of light were visible in the east, when a loud ringing of the chamber bell startled the servants of Mrs. Stimpson's mansion. Hannah, who was quietly reposing with Augustus by her side, while Ella occupied a crib near her, started up at the unusual sound, and was wondering if she had not been deceived by a dream, when a second peal, louder than the first, caused her to spring from the bed and proceed to throw on her clothes. But before she had had time to dress even in this hasty manner, Mr. Stimpson was heard in the entry calling, in a distressed voice, "Hannah, come quick."

She threw a shawl over her shoulders, and hastened to his room, where she found her mistress had fainted, after having been ill for an hour or more. One of the other servants soon appearing, the family physician was hastily summoned. After many careful inquiries into her

case, the doctor shook his head as he walked gravely out of the room. Mr. Stimpson followed, leaving Hannah with the patient, who was lying in a stupor, unconscious of what was passing around her. She had been unwell with a cold for a day or two, but insisted, contrary to her husband's wishes, upon going to a party the evening before. He represented the danger she incurred in thus exposing herself; but she only replied, "I'll go if I get my death of cold." He said no more, and accompanied her; but long before the usual time for her to return home, she requested him to call the carriage, saying, "My head aches so violently I can hardly see." She, however, was somewhat relieved after she retired, and had taken an anodyne to induce sleep. Her husband was awakened by a loud laugh from her toward morning, and for a moment supposed her to be dreaming; but her incoherent language soon convinced him that she was delirious. He tried to recall her senses, when she fainted. The physician pronounced it

an attack of brain fever, and gave little encouragement that she would live.

“And will she not have her reason?” asked Mr. Stimpson, while his voice trembled with emotion.

A solemn shake of the head gave a fearful meaning to the words, “God only knows what is before her.”

After an hour, Dr. L. returned with an eminent brother physician, for a consultation upon her case. When they left the room, the afflicted husband joined them, and though they certainly did not express much hope of her recovery, yet Mr. Stimpson, who eagerly watched every motion, was somewhat encouraged by the appearance of his long-tried friend Dr. L., whose manner was more hopeful than when first called to her bed. After the consulting physician had retired, in a few whispered words arrangements were made for the proper care of the poor sufferer.

And now the worth of Hannah, the nurse maid, became apparent. She had a sister about

sixteen years of age, who had been in the country but a short time, and having passed a day or two with Hannah, the children were somewhat acquainted with her. For this sister, whose name was Margie, the thoughtful nurse had already sent; so that when Mr. Stimpson, almost distracted by the suddenness of the shock, looked helplessly around while the doctor was giving directions about the medicine, as if it was impossible for him to comprehend or remember them, Hannah came forward, and in a firm, self-reliant manner, received them. "Yes, sir, I shall do as you bid me. This medicine in the cup is to be given once in an hour. If she falls asleep, I'm not to waken her; but if she grows more wild like, a teaspoonful from the tumbler will bring her to reason."

The complacent nod with which Dr. L. regarded the young woman as she repeated the directions, to show him that she understood them, would have been sufficient to inspire confidence in her skill without his low words as he

left the chamber, "Let her alone; she knows what she's about. I watched her well when the children were sick."

And the result proved that she did know. Through the long days and nights which followed, she rose above all fatigue. It was her hand which bathed the burning brow. It was her voice which soothed the poor sufferer. It was from her alone the patient would consent to take the medicine. As the temporary relief afforded by the vigorous treatment had soon passed away, and the certainty that she must die forced itself upon his mind, Mr. Stimpson was wholly disabled from participating in the care of the kind nurse for her sick mistress. All her worldliness and selfishness were forgotten — every thing, but that she was his dearly-beloved wife, the mother of his children, that she would soon leave him desolate, and his poor babes motherless. When, at the earnest request of Hannah, he sought his couch, how fruitful his imagination was in inventing excuses for her

conduct! How ready and anxious to blame himself and exonerate her! How, with his whole soul, he poured out before God his prayers in her behalf! O that she might be restored to reason, and fitted for the change before her! It was all in vain that he tried to sleep; and when Hannah saw that he invariably returned to the bedside of his unconscious wife, more pallid and care-worn than he left it, she ceased to urge him. It was to Mr. Stimpson an inexpressible comfort to find that in the devoted, untiring nurse he had a Christian friend. It was during the fourth night of her sickness, neighbors and friends had offered and urged their services upon the afflicted family; but Dr. L., when consulted, said, "If Hannah can endure the fatigue for one night more, I would rather not have her leave the room."

Mr. Stimpson sat with the physician until midnight, while Hannah slept on a couch in the same apartment. After that she resumed her place by the patient, and Mr. Stimpson threw

himself upon the couch. Exhausted by nights and days of watching, he fell asleep, from which he was awakened by a monotonous sound from the bed. Slightly raising his head, he listened eagerly, and soon the tears flowed down his cheeks as he heard Hannah engaged in earnest prayer for her mistress. She had fallen on her knees by the side of the bed, and forgetting the presence of any one but her God, she implored a blessing for the soul of the poor woman who was so soon to appear before her final Judge. Her hands were clasped, and the fountains of her tears were broken up, as her importunate prayer ascended to heaven.

When she arose, Mr. Stimpson advanced to the bed, and leaned over his poor wife, who had sank into a troubled sleep. But she soon awoke, and they saw that a change had passed over her. For nearly two hours her cries were dreadful beyond description. They sounded like nothing human, but more like a brute in distress. The poor distracted husband fled to the

most remote part of the house; but even there his ears rung with the dreadful cry; and, unable to endure the prolonged anxiety, he returned to her side. Hannah alone remained outwardly calm, and only by her excessive palor showed how much she sympathized in the distress. Toward morning, Mrs. Stimpson became quiet, and at length fell into a stupor from which nothing could rouse her; and the devoted nurse begged her master to send for the children, who, with their attendant, had been at the house of Mrs. Evans since the first day of their mother's sickness. They soon came, accompanied by their kind friend, but were only in time to imprint a farewell kiss upon her cold cheek, before the spirit of Mrs. Stimpson took its flight.

We pass over the sad scenes which immediately followed. Mr. and Mrs. Evans proved themselves true friends to the afflicted husband. It was by their kindness and care that suitable arrangements were made for the funeral, and

proper dress provided for the children. But in all this the lady found an efficient coöperator in the worthy Hannah. She even surprised Mrs. Evans by the soundness of her judgment, her tact and good sense, and she rejoiced that Ella and Augustus would have so trusty a friend.

Three weeks later, Mrs. Salsbury, a widowed sister of Mr. Stimpson, came to reside with them. Mrs. Blake, the mother of Mrs. Stimpson, urged her son-in-law to give up housekeeping and board with her; but to this he could not for a moment consent. He wanted a quiet home, where he might have time and opportunity to improve by the solemn providence with which he had been visited, and where he might devote himself to the education of his dear children. His sister had for many years been an invalid; that is, she was not able to endure care or fatigue, or to go abroad except in very pleasant weather; but she was just such an one as he chose for a companion in his bereavement. She had known sorrow, and could sympathize

with him, and he knew and approved the kind of influence she would exert over his motherless babes. Hannah had been raised to the position of housekeeper, while her sister Margie took her place in the nursery. In this capacity she continued many years, and conducted herself with so much prudence and discretion, as to gain for herself the respect of all with whom she was associated. Ella and Augustus regarded her almost as a mother, and were treated by her with the affection of a parent. As they grew older, their father earnestly endeavored to educate them by the precepts of the sacred word. When, at the age of eighteen, Ella left her father's house, accompanied by the faithful Hannah, for a home her husband had provided, she expressed much gratitude to her father and her mother-in-law, that they had impressed upon her the importance of a thorough domestic education, especially such as would enable her to rule her household by the law of kindness.

The Stolen Dress.

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THE STOLEN DRESS.

CHAPTER I.

MANŒUVRES.

The Party. — Ida's Entreaties to attend it. — Her Means for accomplishing her Purpose. — Description of her. — Her Father's Fears. — Her Engagement. — Her Sadness at her Lover's Absence. — Some Account of Ruth Grant. — Ida's Visit to the Springs. — Sad Change in her Character. — Her Father's pecuniary Losses.

“MAMMA! dear mamma! I know you will not refuse my request. I will promise to be very discreet and prudent, if you will allow me to accompany that charming lady, Mrs. Benson, to Mrs. Lothrop's levee.”

Mrs. Lang slowly shook her head; but Ida, not in the least doubting whether she should gain the desired end, tossed back her curls,

pouted out her full red lips in a manner her young admirers had often assured her was irresistible, and, throwing herself into a large easy chair, added, in an indifferent tone, "Well, then, I shall miss the best opportunity I have yet had for forming the acquaintance of Mr. Murray, about whom you and father have so much to say."

"Are you sure he is to be present? I did not know he had returned from the country." Mrs. Lang had suddenly acquired interest in the subject under discussion; and as, by her kindling eye and eager inquiry, Ida became convinced that she was upon the right track, she calmly replied, "O, yes, he is sure to be there: Mrs. Lothrop is a connection of his mother's, and herself assured me of his presence."

"But can you make suitable preparation in so short a period? I should wish you to appear to advantage; that is," she added, as Ida, seeing the victory was won, threw aside her assumed indifference and sprang from her chair, — "that

is, if I consent for you to go ; but, really, Dexter," she continued, addressing her husband, " I have serious objections to having our daughter appear in company with a person of so doubtful reputation, and all the more because she is, as Ida says, charming and fascinating. What do you think ? Is it well to trust Ida with her ? "

" Don't appeal to me," replied Mr. Lang, with a smile ; " let Ida plead her cause, and decide for yourself."

The gentleman, for the last half hour, had been quietly watching the manœuvres of his daughter, and though conscious that her course was neither straightforward nor honorable, yet he could not help being amused at the tactics she had displayed ; neither could he deny that the variety of expression her face had assumed had served to heighten her beauty.

The mother heaved a profound sigh as she rejoined, " It is always so. In any case of difficulty you say, ' Decide for yourself.' "

After all," said Ida, " I don't know as I

care to go. I dare say it will be dreadfully dull, as there is to be no dancing; and Mr. Murray and I should not agree at all, he is so dreadfully prosy, and expects ladies to behave at a party as if they were in church. I will stay at home, or go with Ruth to visit her mother."

As she said this, the young girl glanced from under her long lashes to witness the effect upon her father and mother. There was an expression upon the countenance of the former which she could not understand, but one look at her mother convinced her that she would not be allowed to absent herself from the society of Warren Murray.

At this moment Mrs. Lang was summoned from the room; and Ida, approaching her father, repeated, in a most dutiful tone, "Yes, I will stay at home with you."

"Nonsense, child!" was his unexpected reply. "I see through all your manœuvres, and am pained that you should resort to artifice and deceit to accomplish your purpose."

For one moment Ida was so wholly astonished

as to be unable to reply. At the words of stern reproof from her father, — the first she had ever received from his lips, — a flush of genuine emotion rose to her cheek, and, with a faltering voice, she asked, “Father, what can you mean?”

“I mean, my child, that we are all wrong; but your mother and I are far more so than you. I wonder I have never seen the subject in this light before.

“Yes, I will confess I have been deeply pained at the thought that my beloved Ida, instead of pleading earnestly and truthfully for permission to attend the levee, should exhibit such want of frankness, and with so much skill, too, as to prove her to be an adept in such arts.

“O my daughter, if, after all my love for you, my dearest hopes should be disappointed! if, instead of an affectionate, dutiful child, I should wake up to find you given wholly to fashion and display, discontented and weary when called to the performance of home duties, only wearing your gayest smiles when you are surrounded by

the silly young fops who flatter and flirt with you !”

“Dear father,” cried Ida, interrupting him, and lifting her long lashes, heavy with unshed tears, that she might look in his face, “I did not wish to pain you. I did not think I was doing wrong.”

Mr. Lang caught his daughter to his breast, imprinted a kiss upon her low, broad brow, and without another word retired from the room.

Ida Lang was an only child. From her birth she had been accustomed to every indulgence which money or affection could procure. Her mother was a woman of weak intellect, and almost from the child's infancy, had been obliged to yield to Ida's stronger will. Absorbed in mercantile pursuits, Mr. Lang had only seen his daughter at the short intervals when she was at home from school, and then, as she was loving in manner, and exquisitely lovely in person, deemed himself most happy in being the father of such a child.

At sixteen Ida left school and entered society, where her beauty and apparent artlessness created quite a sensation. She had now been at home but a few months, and her father had been the witness of several scenes not unlike that narrated above. At first he was merely amused to see her seize upon the weak points in her mother's character, and use them as weapons in her own behalf; but of late, he had feared that all was not right in her moral training, and had experienced secret misgivings as to the result of her school education.

He found it impossible to shut his eyes again to the fact that his dear Ida, though as perfect a vision of loveliness as a father's eye could rest upon, was any thing rather than the artless child of nature he had fondly imagined. Bitter remorse often caused him to arise from a sleepless couch, and he experienced the keenest regrets that he had not sooner studied the character of his only child.

Months passed on, and amid the pleasing

anticipations of the present, all past anxieties seemed forgotten. The most delightful wishes for their daughter were realized, when Warren Murray led her, trembling and pale from emotion, to their presence, for a blessing upon their love.

In the blissful realities to which her young heart had awakened, the lovely traits in Ida's character seemed to acquire a new lustre, while those that were false and forbidding were cast into a deep shade. With all the fulness of a fresh heart, she loved him who had turned aside from the gay belles who had so earnestly sought his notice, and had chosen her, in her youth and inexperience, to be his bride.

Mrs. Lang would willingly have consented to the eagerly-urged wishes of the lover for a speedy union, especially as he was about to visit Germany for a year, and wished Ida to accompany him; but Mr. Lang was resolute in his refusal. He wished her character to be more fully developed. She still needed several months

before the completion of her sixteenth year, had received no domestic education; and he himself had experienced too many discomforts, from a want of thorough training for home duties in the case of his wife, to be willing to subject the husband of his daughter to similar trials.

And so the lovers parted, with the most implicit confidence in each other's purity of heart and governing motives for life. Ah, how often before they again met did the father regret that he had not waived his objections to their wishes, and allowed her to adapt herself to home duties under the sheltering influence of a husband's love!

For a time, the young girl was inconsolable, positively refused to go at all into society, and gave herself up to the comfort of nursing her own griefs. During the winter which followed, her chief pleasure was in receiving and answering letters from her dear Warren, and in repeating over and over again to her cousin Ruth the history of her affection.

This young girl was the daughter of a cousin of Mr. Lang. Early deprived of a husband's support, Mrs. Grant had obtained a situation in an academy for young misses, and her daughter had shared Ida's home. Upon the return of the latter from school, Ruth had joined her mother; but now Mr. Lang had persuaded his cousin to leave, for a time at least, her arduous duties, and superintend his daughter's home education. He wished her to be, what his mother had been, a thorough housewife.

Under the superintendence of her aunt, Ida, in these months of comparative quiet, acquired some degree of skill in housewifery, certainly enough to elicit high praise from her father, though her mother continually wondered why he wished their daughter to soil her hands by contact with culinary utensils.

The summer succeeding the departure of Mr. Murray, this young girl was rendered very sad by intelligence from him that his return would probably be delayed until spring. In order to

divert her mind, her father readily consented that she should join a party of friends who were intending to make the tour of the lakes, visiting Saratoga, Niagara, Quebec, and Montreal. Alas for the effects of this trip! Poor Ida was wholly overpowered with the flattery, nay, the homage, which she received. It so happened that, unknown to her father, and even to Ida at the time the tour was projected, Mrs. Benson was of the party, and in a few days resumed all her former influence over the susceptible girl. On her return home, after an absence of scarce two months, her friends could hardly believe her to be the same loving, amiable child from whom they had so lately parted. At home, unless excited by company, she was languid, and often irritable that she did not receive the amount of adulation which she claimed as her due; and though her father, who, at her importunity, accompanied her night after night to places of amusement or parties of pleasure, could not restrain an emotion of pride as he watched her,

the centre of a gay circle, her exquisitely turned features lighted by excitement, her eyes vying with the diamond circle upon her finger, yet such a feeling was quickly succeeded by pain, as he witnessed her affectation, and evident desire for admiration.

Poor Ida! what wilt thou do in the hour of adversity, which, with swift wings, is approaching?

During the autumn, Mrs. Grant and Ruth often noticed that Mr. Lang was unusually serious, but attributed it at first solely to his anxiety for his daughter. It was therefore not quite so much of a shock to them as to his immediate family, when one day he returned from the counting room pale with excitement, and in answer to their eager inquiries, said, "I'm a bankrupt!"

Yes, his riches had taken to themselves wings, and flown away. By the imprudence of a young partner who had been taken into the firm, bad

debts had been incurred, and one of their largest creditors failing at this time, they were obliged to suspend payment.

The effect of this sudden announcement upon Mrs. Lang was a severe fit of sickness, from which her mind never recovered its tone. Upon Ida it seemed to produce but little effect. She appeared more than ever desirous to plunge deeper and deeper into the exciting pleasures of the season. Her aunt reasoned and advised, and Ruth remonstrated with tears, but with little effect: excitement Ida persisted she must have, or she should die. She already perceived in the failing attention of some of her admirers the sad influence of her loss of property, and determined to regain it by increased affability.

Until his misfortunes gathered thick and fast about him, Mr. Lang never realized the treasure he possessed in Ruth. Indeed, hers was a character which needed adversity and trial to make it shine; she had always been timid and retir-

ing, especially in her intercourse with strangers, and had been pained far more than she ought to have been at her position of dependence. Now, she felt, was the time to repay the kindness which had been lavished upon her.

CHAPTER II.

THE GAY BELLE.

Kindness of the Creditors.—Ruth's Gratitude.—The Ball.
—Ida's Method of procuring a Dress.—Her Punishment.
—Her Conscience aroused.—Happiness at last.

SOON after the change in Mr. Lang's circumstances, Mrs. Grant resumed her duties in school, leaving Mrs. Lang in charge of Ruth. Finding Ida shrank from the duties of housekeeper, Ruth gradually assumed the entire charge of the domestic arrangements.

By the consent of the creditors, Mr. Lang was able to keep his elegant mansion, and an annuity, settled upon his wife, afforded them a respectable support. The gentleman often felt that if the change in his circumstances should be the means of restoring his daughter to him, he would not regret it. It was his intention, as

soon as his affairs were fully arranged, to solicit a clerkship in the firm of some of his friends, who had already pressed upon him their assistance; but of this Ruth knew nothing. With her uncle's advice and permission, she had reduced the household, by dismissing most of the servants; and her voice could be heard, as clear as a bell, singing for very joyousness, as she ran from room to room, in the performance of her self-imposed duties.

Early in the winter Ruth received an urgent invitation from one of her mother's pupils, a young lady who had for a time been a classmate of her own, to spend a few months with her previous to her marriage, and then to join her party in their wedding tour. For a few hours she hesitated, as it had been the fondest wish of her life to visit Europe; but duty triumphed over inclination, and the brave girl wrote an affectionate refusal. She, however, afterwards consented to visit her friend for a week, and this resulted in her offer to make up some of the elegant

dresses which were part of the bridal trousseau. In this way she hoped to be able to add somewhat to the comfort of her uncle's table, though well aware he would have opposed such a measure.

The time for the wedding drew near, and one after another of rich silks and satins having passed under Ruth's skilful fingers, had been satisfactorily completed and carried home, no one but her cousin being aware of the fact.

One morning, early in March, Ida received an invitation to a large ball, which she instantly accepted, but afterwards regretted having done so, as she had nothing suitable to wear in so gay an assembly. The day of the ball arrived, and still the important question of dress was undecided. She knew it would be in vain to ask her father for money; and Ruth, whose advice she often sought, was gone to pass the evening and night with her friend. As the young girl wandered restlessly through the house, she perceived lying upon her cousin's bed an

elegant, rose-colored, satin dress, exactly what she would have chosen for the occasion had the means been within her reach. She approached the rich garment, held it up before herself in front of the mirror. "O, how becoming!" was the involuntary exclamation. "What harm would there be in my wearing it to the party, and returning it here before daylight?" was the question at which her thoughts had arrived, when half an hour later she sought her own room. By what sophistry she answered this question we cannot tell; but an hour before her friend was to call for her, she sent their only female servant with a note, saying, "I wish to make my toilet at your house," and a carriage soon appeared, conveying her and the stolen dress away for that purpose.

"How exquisitely beautiful!" "How lovely!" were the exclamations which met her ear, as an hour or two later she entered the ball room, leaning on the arm of the husband of her friend.

And this was true: never before had a vision

of more perfect beauty and grace met the admiring gaze of eager eyes. The well-fitting bodice displayed to advantage her rounded, symmetrical figure, while below the folds of the rich flowing skirts appeared the toe of a tiny white satin slipper. In her hair, which was chestnut, and which she always wore in loose, flowing curls, was twined a wreath of natural flowers, and an exquisite white fringed camellia was fastened in her bodice in the place of a brooch. There was an unusual lightness in her eye, and a deeper rose tint on her cheek, whether occasioned by the consciousness of her loveliness, the reflection of the delicate shade of her dress, or by the whisper of conscience, I will not undertake to say.

The evening was passing most triumphantly. The engagements for her hand were so numerous that to fulfil them would require her to be upon the floor more than half the night. Soon after her return from the refreshment room, feeling very weary, she seated herself in a large chair, and watched the parties forming a quadrille.

Her attention was quickly arrested by the sound of her father's name, and she leaned eagerly forward in the endeavor to hear what was said.

"Yes, I always believed so," added another voice, — "at least until to-night. He always seemed to be an honorable man; but I confess I have had my doubts since I have seen his daughter dressed out like a queen: money must be plenty to find such rich dresses as that."

"I have wondered myself how she procured such an expensive wardrobe," added the first voice; "but I have no doubt as to her father; he is the very soul of honor."

"What do you think Murray will say to all that has taken place? I hear he is soon expected home: she does not seem to mourn his absence any more than she does her father's losses."

"I do not think the change of fortune would alter his affection in the least; but I do think that her heartless conduct in leaving her sick mother for places of amusement, and in returning her father's indulgence with neglect, at a

time when her dutiful attentions would be a cordial to his heart, will affect him so much that he will break their engagement. He will do so if he is the man of sense I deem him."

Poor Ida gasped for breath, and, leaning against her chair, the high back of which hid her from view, she covered her face with her hands and for one moment thought herself suffocating; then, with a great effort controlling her feelings, she rose from her seat with the determination to seek her friend and return home. She had advanced, however, but a few steps, when she perceived a figure in her path, and without raising her eyes was hastening to pass it, when her name was pronounced in the well-remembered voice of her lover, and looking up she saw him before her.

"Can I assist you?" he asked; "are you in search of your carriage?"

"I want to find Mrs. Sever; I wish to return home," faltered the poor girl, the blood receding from her heart as she perceived from the manner

of Mr. Murray, that the words of his friend would prove true.

Weary with the fatigue and excitement of the evening, stung with chagrin and remorse at the remarks she had overheard, she was ill prepared for the conviction which was so suddenly forced upon her, that her lover was lost to her: she staggered, and would have fallen to the floor, had not Mr. Murray sprang to her assistance, and led her to a chair. But alas! her troubles were not yet over. In the slight bustle consequent upon her faintness, some one jostled against a servant who was carrying a salver of wine glasses, and the whole contents were spilled upon the stolen dress.

Bursting into a passion of tears, she sobbed out, "O, take me home! I must go home."

Scarce five minutes were passed before she found herself borne away from the brilliantly illuminated hall, the scenes of which she had anticipated with so much pleasure. She scarcely realized that she was the only occupant of



"Oh! take me home. I must go home." P. 212.

the coach, she was in such agony of fear as to the result of her misconduct. When the vehicle stopped, she drew her veil closely over her face, and not noticing the tenderness with which she was lifted to the ground and assisted up the steps, was not aware that Mr. Murray had taken a seat with the driver in order to see her safely home, until he said, in a voice of forced calmness, "Good night, Ida; I will see you in the morning."

Without a word in reply she rushed to her room, shut and bolted her door, and gave herself up to her grief and remorse. During the long hours of that never to be forgotten night, she walked her room, sometimes weeping and wringing her hands, then trying to control herself that she might devise some method of escape from detection. Would it be possible to deceive Ruth by denying that she knew any thing of the injury to the dress? She feared not. At length, in the midst of her distress, a still small voice whispered, "Confess your guilt and ask

forgiveness." She started and gazed around the room, so distinctly did the words come home to her heart, and with a fresh burst of tears she acknowledged that was her best course.

At breakfast the next morning, Mr. Lang perceived that his daughter, though pale, wore an expression of calmness which he had not seen upon her face for many months. They had not left the table when Mr. Murray was announced, and her father, after waiting a few moments and wondering at the restraint of the young couple, went up to his wife's room, leaving them alone.

"Mr. Murray," said Ida, as soon as her father had closed the door, "I have a sad story for your ear;" and without allowing him time to remonstrate, she commenced with her trip to Niagara, and gave him a faithful account of her conduct from that hour up to the events of the last evening. She made no effort to excuse herself, though her confession was not without many tears and much effort at self-control. Then rising, she took from her finger the ring he had

placed there, and putting it into his hand, said, "I am not worthy of your love;" then, fearing her deep emotion should be betrayed, she hastened from the room.

"Ida, Ida," he called; but she had heard her cousin Ruth enter the hall, and joined her to make a similar confession. I need not describe the scene which ensued. Ruth perceived that her cousin was really penitent, and though grieved beyond measure at what had occurred, yet she could but hope that the lesson would prove salutary. She also deeply sympathized with her afflicted cousin in the burst of grief which followed her announcement that Warren and she had parted forever.

My story has already far exceeded its limits, and I must hasten to a close. By the considerate care of Ruth, the injury to the bridal dress was remedied by the abstraction of the soiled breadth, and on the afternoon of the same day, was returned to its owner in as perfect a state as ever. But not so soon did poor Ida recover from

the effects of her folly and thoughtless extravagance. Conscience at length was aroused, and set in order before her the long catalogue of her sins. In vain she endeavored to throw the burden upon her parents and those who had pandered to her weakness; the small voice of the inward monitor whispered, "The fault lay in thine own heart." It was not until after a fearful struggle, continuing through many months, during which time sickness and death had entered their household, that peace at length came to her weary spirit.

Four years latter, in a small but beautiful suburban cottage, a couple stand before a man of God, who has just pronounced the solemn words which bind them to each other for life. "And now," he adds, "my beloved, may God keep you and bless you, and cause the light of his countenance to shine upon you, and give you peace. Amen."

He ceases, and Ruth, now a happy young

matron, leads up to the bridal pair an elderly man, feeble from recent illness, that he may bestow his parental blessing. Ida raises her tear-dimmed eyes to his face, and, in answer to her low-spoken words of love, whispers, "It is Warren's desire, dear father, as well as my own, to render your last days your best days."

In after years, when the care of immortals was given to the young mother, she prayed earnestly for grace and wisdom to train them in the paths of virtue and strict rectitude; and if ever she perceived signs of youthful vanity in her young charge, would remind them of the sufferings she had experienced in connection with the stolen dress.

Willie and his Mother.

WILLIE AND HIS MOTHER.

CHAPTER I.

IMPATIENCE.

The sickly Boy. — His feeble Mother. — His kind Aunt. —
The pleasant Project.

“THERE, ma, you’ve knocked my pretty house down again!” whined a pale, sickly-looking boy of six years old, as he wiped his sleeve across his eyes in the vain effort to keep back his tears.

“Well, if you don’t want your houses knocked down you must get out of my way. There, take them this minute, and go off to the farther corner of the room.”

The weary, fretful mother endeavored, by the harshness of her tone, to silence the gush of

tenderness which a glance into the tearful eyes of her boy caused to spring up in her heart.

Willie arose silently, filled his apron with the blocks, and removed them to the spot indicated by his mother. To avoid a recurrence of his trouble, he then fenced off the place allotted to him with chairs, and, feeling secure in his retreat, again commenced his play. After two or three successful experiments, which entirely obliterated from his mind all remembrance of his mother's hasty words, he called out, in great glee, "O ma! isn't that a high steeple? May I knock it down?"

"I don't care what you do, if you'll only keep still," replied the mother, without hearing the question. Alas for the short-lived happiness of Willie! With a shout of delight he drew away the underpinning, and his lofty structure fell, with a heavy crash, to the floor, causing the baby to scream with affright.

Mrs. Grant flew at the child, and gave him a violent blow upon his ear. "You naughty,

wicked boy!" she exclaimed, angrily; "don't you know better than to make such a noise when the baby is asleep?" Then, leaving him to comfort himself as best he might, she hastened to the crib to try to hush the infant. But no; it was wide awake, and she was obliged to suspend all other labors and put it to sleep again. She was hardly seated in her low rocking chair, when the door opened, and her sister, who lived quite near, walked into the kitchen.

Mrs. Grant nodded in return to the pleasant "good-morning," but could not speak. Indeed, she was on the point of giving way to her over-excited feelings by a hearty fit of crying.

"What is the matter, Sarah?" inquired Mrs. Warner. "You look as if you hadn't a friend in the world. And Willie, too, is crying. What has happened? Come here, Willie."

"Matter enough," sobbed Mrs. Grant, wiping the tears which now poured down her cheeks. "Here I am alone, with that child and a baby seven weeks old, to do all my work, and hardly

strength enough to walk straight across the room. Look at that basket full of clothes to iron; and, as if that was not enough, William has sent home a pair of chickens to roast. I had just washed the baby, and got her to sleep, and thought I should get along some while she had her morning nap; but that naughty boy went and made such a noise that it woke her up."

"Why, Willie! I thought you were ma's nice little boy!" and aunt Charlotte, who had been holding the child in her lap, made a show as if she were astonished.

"I didn't mean to," whispered the boy; "and she said I might, too;" and then, satisfied by her eye that she did not wholly condemn him, he again nestled himself close to her side.

"'Tis too bad," she resumed, turning to her sister; "you are not strong enough to work so; and your getting fretted is what makes the baby so worrisome. When is Bridget coming back? Her sister was taken sick at a most unfortunate time."

“It does seem, sometimes, as if I couldn’t move another step,” continued Mrs. Grant, quite overcome by the voice of sympathy; “and William don’t realize how weak I am, nor how much care such a baby is. Besides, he is worried about his business; and as, when he comes home, he finds the house looking tidy, and his meals cooked, he asks no questions, but seems to think the work is done without hands.”

The baby having fallen asleep again, Mrs. Grant arose cautiously to lay it in the crib. While she was absent, her kind-hearted sister was deeply absorbed in thought. At length a plan occurred to her; but she determined not to mention it until she had consulted her husband. “I am sorry,” she said, as Mrs. Grant returned softly to the room, “that I can’t stay; for I left bread in the oven, and I am afraid it will burn up. But I will take your fine clothes and iron them at home, and Willie shall go with me, and stay till night. There, don’t say a word; I can do it as well as not,” she added, as her sister

began to remonstrate. "Come, Willie, get your cap."

"Well, I am sure, you are the kindest sister that ever was. I don't know what I should do without you. If you will take the clothes, you'd better leave Willie. He'll only trouble you."

"Trouble me! No, indeed; I can work a great deal faster when he is with me, he's such good company;" and the aunt, as she tied on the cap, gave the child a hearty kiss, which was responded to by a look so full of confiding affection, that she could hardly keep from catching him in her arms; but she restrained herself, and only said, "See, he is longing to begin his catechising now."

When Mr. Grant returned home at the usual hour for dinner, the fowls, nicely stuffed and roasted, were smoking upon the table, the vegetables were cooked charmingly, the clothes, except those taken by Mrs. Warner, were airing upon the horse, and, what was better than all, the baby was still asleep, and Mrs. Grant, though heated and flushed by her exertions, yet seemed

pleased at the success which had attended her morning labors. She prided herself upon being an excellent cook and a thorough housewife. A few words of sympathy and appreciation of her services would have enabled her to go on with fresh courage in her arduous employment. But Mr. Grant was fully occupied by cares connected with his business, and thought not of the feebleness of his wife. He, to be sure, paid her dinner the compliment of eating from it most heartily, and then hurried away, merely saying, as he went out, "I am going to M—— on business, and shall not be at home till late; I shall get supper there." The door slammed together as he passed through, waking the baby from her long nap, and the mother, leaving the dishes upon the table, went, with a sigh, to attend to its wants. Feeling very weary, she threw herself upon the bed, while she nursed the child; and there she lay for half an hour, thinking no other woman ever had such trials as hers. She might as well be dead. She was

doing no good ; nobody thanked her for wearing herself out with work. She really believed Willie would be happier if he could live with aunt Charlotte ; and her husband was so absorbed in his business she didn't think he would miss her much. But what would become of the helpless baby ? And, O, she thought, what would become of me ? I am not prepared to die ; and then she thought of her little girl who had died the year before, of the dangerous sickness of Willie, from which he had never wholly recovered, and of the many resolutions she then formed, the promises she made, if God would spare her life. How had she fulfilled them ? Softened and subdued, she wept again until she fell asleep.

Early the following morning, while she, with her husband, was seated at the breakfast table, Mrs. Warner entered with Willie, whom she had kept through the night.

“ Well, what did she say about it ? ” she inquired eagerly of her brother-in-law.

"About what?" asked Mrs. Grant, looking up in surprise.

Mr. Grant slightly colored, as he replied, "I really forgot to mention it to her. The fact is, my business troubles me, and I lay awake thinking of it until late into the night."

A bitter reply rose to the lips of the visitor, but she repressed it, and said cheerfully, "You'll have to be busy as a bee to-day, Sarah, for to-morrow morning Henry has promised me the horse and carryall to take you home to father's. Mother's care will soon bring the color back to your cheeks. Here's Willie can think of nothing but bossy and chickens, which I have been telling him about while I hurried through my morning work."

Sarah's eyes sparkled with pleasure, as her sister rapidly unfolded this pleasing purpose; but in a moment her brow clouded again, and she answered mournfully, "Thank you, Charlotte, but I don't see how I can go. What would become of my husband?" and she heaved a deep sigh.

“I shall do well enough. I shall sleep here, and take my meals with Charlotte. It was all decided last night, and I’m sorry I forgot to tell you. I want you to stay three or four weeks, until you are stronger and better able to work.”

Mr. Grant, as he gazed at his wife, seemed to realize the truth of what her sister had vainly tried to impress upon him the night before. She did, indeed, look exceedingly frail, and often pressed her hand upon her chest, as if suffering.

“By that time Bridget will be back,” suggested Mrs. Warner, when he turned to leave the room.

“O Charlotte, you never can know how I thank you!” exclaimed Mrs. Grant, her eyes glistening with tears of pleasure. “This morning, when I came down to get breakfast, I felt so weak and faint I could hardly stand. I had to ask William to bring in the wood and put on the tea-kettle. I am sure the very air of home will cure me; and then mother’s good new milk!”

“Yes, yes,” responded Mrs. Warner. “Rest and good care are what you need, and what you’ll have. I’d keep Willie with me, only the change will do him so much good, and mother will be disappointed. But we must work as well as talk. I can stay till eleven; so you go and lay out all the clothes you want to carry, while I do up the dishes, and then I’ll pack them. We must start early, so that I can stay four or five hours in the middle of the day.”

In the midst of the cheerful preparations, it was astonishing how quickly the hours flew by. Long before night the arrangements were complete. Mr. Grant’s clothes were laid where he could find them, and every article requisite for the short journey was on the bed in the spare room. The tired mother retired early to rest, weak and wearied, indeed, but with more hopeful feelings at her heart than had been there for many weeks. Dear little Willie lay in his trundle-bed at her side, his head resting on his arm, and his mouth wreathed in smiles, as in

his dreams he was already at grandpa's. "Poor child!" thought his mother, as she gazed at him, "he has had a hard time since I was sick. How pleased he was to-day when I talked with him of what he would see! I am afraid I don't manage just right with him; but I'll try to do better when——" Here her thoughts became indistinct, and she was soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER II.

TAKING BOARDERS.

Visit to the old Homestead. — Returning Health. — New Troubles. — A Glance into the Boarding House. — The fretful Mother. — Little Willie's Request. — His Mother's Refusal. — Fatal Result.

It is not my purpose to speak of the visit home, which lasted nearly a month. Suffice it to say that Mrs. Grant returned to L. with recruited strength and spirits, and that her husband declared that she looked not a day older than when she came there a bride. Her little boy, too, realized the good effects of the journey. His heightened color and merry laugh reminded his father of his appearance before his long and severe illness. Bridget had returned long enough before her arrival to have the house put in order for her. Mr. Grant was in high spirits at her return in good health: alto-

gether life seemed very bright; and the young wife and mother entered again upon her duties with courage and hope.

Thus nearly a year passed pleasantly away; at the end of which time trouble, like a dark cloud, seemed settling upon their horizon. The speculation in which Mr. Grant had been engaged proved a mere bubble, and burst in his hands. His regular business, for want of attention, yielded but little profit. It became absolutely necessary to retrench in their family expenses. The husband proposed dismissing Bridget. Then followed a proposition to take a few boarders; to both of which the wife consented, though Mrs. Warner urged her disapproval. But she was in perfect health, Willie old enough to go to school, and when at home relieved her by amusing the baby. It was her duty to do what she could to assist her husband.

"Yes," replied the sister, "but you will find it an expensive mode of assistance. If you intend to have boarders, keep Bridget. But my

opinion is, if William would give his mind to his business, he could support you in comfort."

Six months later, let us visit them once more. It is a cold evening in November. Mr. Grant is smoking in the dining room, while his wife washes the cups, and prepares for the morning meal. The three boarders have just left the house for the village store, or elsewhere; there are no home pleasures to induce them to remain.

"There's that baby again!" fretted Mrs. Grant, as a cry came from the nursery above. "Do, William, go and still her. She'll kill me, that child will. I declare I am as tired as a dog. Whip her, or do something to make her lie still."

Mr. Grant took a lamp from the table, and walked deliberately up stairs. The children, who had been in bed an hour, were still wide awake, and for a few moments the sound of harsh words, and even a blow, could be distinctly heard from the room underneath.

"I do wonder what he is doing to those chil-

dren," muttered the mother, impatiently. "He'll get them all stirred up, and I shall have no peace all night. If I wan't so busy I'd go and attend to them myself. What's the matter?" she asked, as her husband returned to the room.

"Nothing," he replied, "only they had been playing, and Willie hurt the baby. He wants some water; but I told him he shouldn't have any, for keeping her awake. I whipped him, and I think he'll be quiet now;" and he sat down to his pipe again.

In less than ten minutes, a little voice was heard at the stairs, "Mamma, I want some water. Please give me some water."

"Go right back to bed this minute, you naughty, wicked boy. You'll wake the baby again. Go back, or I'll whip you soundly." The mother spoke sharply, but the boy did not obey.

"Please, ma, let me come down and get some water. I am so thirsty I can't go to sleep."

"No, you shan't have a drop to-night; go

right back to bed ;” and Mrs. Grant returned to the room, where she was mixing bread, sighing heavily, as she exclaimed, “I’m determined to break Willie of that habit of drinking water after he goes to bed. I’ve enough to do without waiting upon him. There now,” she added, after a pause, “if that isn’t enough to provoke a saint! Here I am, with my hands all in the bread, and not a particle of saleratus is there in the house.”

“Why couldn’t you mention it before?” inquired her husband, knocking the ashes from his pipe.

“Because I forgot it; and I guess you’d forget too, if you had as much to think of as I have.”

Mr. Grant went out, muttering, “Some women are always complaining;” which remark completely overcame his wife, who was already, as she expressed it, tired to death.

She washed her hands, and made a business of crying, which she had not done before for

months; and she had not recovered when, an hour later, her husband returned.

“Heyday! what’s the matter now?” he asked in surprise, as he placed the basket upon the table; but, receiving no answer, he passed through the room into the kitchen, and sat down to the reading of a newspaper he had just received.

Aroused by the urgent necessity of her unfinished work, Mrs. Grant arose, and resumed her operation of mixing the bread. As might be supposed, she was in no pleasant mood for the task. On the contrary, her heart was filled with anger toward her husband, her children, and all the world. Suddenly she heard the door behind her softly open, and Willie’s voice pleading, “Ma, I will be a good boy. If you’ll let me have some water this once, I won’t ask you again.”

The mother was hardly conscious of what she did; but she flew at the child, and gave him a severe blow on his head. She then shook him

violently, and pushed him roughly from the room, exclaiming, "Go to bed, you naughty boy, or I'll shut you up in a dark room, and make you stay alone all night." With a low cry of pain, and one earnest, tearful look into his mother's face, Willie slowly retraced his steps to his bed.

What was there in that look which caused such a struggle in the mother's heart? which carried her back to the time when, with tears, she besought God to spare his life? But she would not yield to these softer emotions. It was a bad habit in the boy to get up after he had gone to bed. She had only done her duty in checking it. Still, turn whichever way she would, those earnest eyes gazed reproachfully into hers. She could not drive them away. Her conscience was aroused, and, in the midst of noisy talk, (for the boarders had returned,) she plainly heard the still small voice, "You struck him in anger. You refused a reasonable request. Your heart is turned against your

child," it repeated again and again. At length, chafed and sore with contending emotions, she hurried through her remaining work, and, merely stopping to ask her husband to see that the house was locked, hastened up stairs to retire to bed.

On opening the nursery door, however, she started back in terror. Willie was sitting upright in bed, his arms tossed wildly over his head, his eyes sparkling, and his cheeks burning with fever.

"Water, *water!*" he whispered through his parched lips, as she ran in haste to his side.

Down stairs she flew, caught up a pitcher from the table, filled it, and, seizing a tumbler from the closet, cried out, "William, for mercy sake, come up stairs!" and sprang back to her boy.

At midnight quite a group were collected in that small room. The village doctor was there, and aunt Charlotte, together with one or two neighbors. Willie was in convulsions, and no entreaty could avail with his mother to give

up her child. With tearless eyes, cheeks and lips pale as the senseless form she held, she resisted every endeavor to take her boy from her arms. One low, wailing cry continually burst from her lips: "O, my Willie! I have killed my darling boy!"

Two days later the child still lived, and the mother still hung over him in speechless agony. Not once since his sickness had she shut her eyes in sleep. Her husband, her baby, her family, were all forgotten. She seemed only to live in the pallid, ghastly form by her side — to breathe when he breathed — to gasp as he gasped; but, above all, to wait and watch unceasingly for one glance of recognition, one look which shall efface or take possession of that which now burns her brain. She knows not that her babe is removed from the house, that the boarders have sought another home, that her kind sister seldom leaves her, or that her husband wanders about the house, goes and returns with the doctor, and

begins to fear that soon he shall have neither wife nor son.

The physician whispers below stairs. A few hours more, — only a few hours, — and the child will be at rest. Then, what of the mother? hoarsely inquires the father. An ominous shake of the head, and the doctor hurries away to avoid giving a reply.

Yes, in a few hours Willie's sufferings ended. His breathing grew fainter and fainter, and then entirely ceased. His eyes had closed for their long sleep. His pale, wan fingers were clasped upon his emaciated breast, which no harsh words could ever again cause to heave with sorrow. Willie's soul has gone to God.

But his mother would not believe it. Upon recovery from a long and death-like swoon, and returning to his bed, she insisted he was better, the crisis was past, he was sweetly sleeping, and would awake conscious. "Yes, yes," she urged, "he will know me then." She appeared astonished at the overwhelming grief of her

husband, who wept in uncontrolled agony. She refused the entreaties of her sister that she would leave the room, but with a ghastly smile pointed to the placid countenance of her boy, and whispered, "He will know me when he awakes."

Upon the pretence of gaining strength for further watching, the physician persuaded her to take a little wine, in which he had mixed a powerful narcotic; and, under the influence of this, she was removed from the room and conveyed to bed, where she lay unconscious that the body of her boy had passed from her sight, that the look which was daguerreotyped upon her memory was his last, and must remain with her forever.

Spring had come; the birds warbled in the trees, and built nests for their young. All nature was bursting into new life and beauty, when Mrs. Grant arose from her bed. A new life also had begun in her soul, and from her heart the song burst forth, "The Lord gave,

and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." From death had sprung immortal life; and she no longer mourned the death of her first-born, but rather thanked God that to her it had yielded the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Mr. Grant, too, was a changed man. He became once more a tender husband and an affectionate father; and when in time another Willie and two little girls were added to their family, it was his earnest endeavor to coöperate with his wife in every thing which would promote their good. Particularly he sought to relieve their mother of every unnecessary burden, that she might devote herself to their comfort and happiness; bearing in mind the divine precept, "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

MRS. LESLIE'S JUVENILE SERIES.



During the last year, we published a uniform edition of a series of volumes on HOME LIFE by this popular author. They are noticed in the succeeding pages, and were designed for adults. Their popularity has greatly increased our confidence in our design, then announced, of publishing a series of volumes on subjects embraced in the same general title, but specially adapted to children and youth, and therefore styled MRS. LESLIE'S JUVENILE SERIES. Several volumes of this latter series were then ready for press. Two of them are now issued; and in the autumn we shall publish others.

VOL. I.

THE MOTHERLESS CHILDREN.

A thrilling story of orphanage, illustrating the trials and temptations of the young, and the happy results of Christian nurture.

VOL. II.

PLAY AND STUDY.

An interesting tale of school days, very suggestive of practical hints to parents and teachers, showing the manner in which they may aid their children and pupils in the invention of their own amusements for their relief and stimulus in study.

VOL. III.

**HOWARD AND HIS TEACHER; with the Sister's
Influence, and other Stories.**

Illustrative of different modes of home government.

VOL. IV.

TRYING TO BE USEFUL.

The object of which is sufficiently indicated by its title. It exhibits the happy results of worthy resolution and endeavor.

VOL. V.

**JACK THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER, and other
Stories.**

Illustrative of the Commandments and other precepts of the Bible.

VOL. VI.

NEVER GIVE UP; or, the Young Housekeeper.

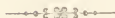
Exhibiting the success and reward of perseverance in the acquisition of fortune and fame.

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A simple, life-like tale. — *Boston Daily Journal*.

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The genial, familiar, *home-style* of this book will secure it popularity and success. — *Christian Register*.

VOL. II.

CORA AND THE DOCTOR; or, Revelations of a Physician's Wife.

Few works that have issued from the American press have excited more interest in their contents, or more curiosity to

know the author than this volume upon its first appearance — an interest and curiosity which the lapse of a few months have rather increased than diminished. The circumstances which originally produced the desire of its author to remain strictly *incognito* having ceased, her literary signature is affixed to this edition. It is distinguished for high-toned morality and ardent piety. In respect to literary merit and artistic finish, it is pronounced by Hon. J. T. Headley, "A remarkable illustration of the power of genius;" by Mrs. E. Hale, "Worthy to stand side by side with 'The Lamplighter,' and its influence even better than that;" by the Daily Advertiser, "Equal to Miss Bremer's 'Neighbors;'" by the American Index, "A mate for 'The Diary of a Physician;'" and by another Reviewer, "Superior to Mrs. Stowe's best;" and is spoken of by other Critics in similar terms.

VOL. III.

THE HOUSEHOLD ANGEL IN DISGUISE.

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A sweet book, — pure, lovely, touching! O that such books might be multiplied. — *Trumpet*.

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